من يستحق أن يُعبد؟

WHO DESERVES TO BE WORSHIPPED?

An open call to seekers of truth from different faiths,
to encourage dialogue and understanding
in the spirit of tolerance and respect

This book focuses a light on:

- Islam's basic principles and characteristics
- Eleven facts about Jesus (peace be upon him) and his mother, Mary
- The amazing prophecies of Muhammad in the Bible
- Proof that Islam remains a sound revelation

Compiled by
Majed S. Al-Rassi

NO DOUBT THIS LIFE IS AN EXAMINATION
WHICH NEEDS YOUR FULL CONSIDERATION
AS TO WHAT YOU WILL TAKE TO
YOUR FINAL DESTINATION
ONLY TRUE BELIEF AND GOOD DEEDS ARE
YOUR WAY TO SALVATION

(Muhammad Sherif)

Contents

Honorific phrases in this book

(the Exalted): used after the mention of God/Allah to express: Glorified *and Exalted is He*

(bpuh): *Blessings and peace be upon him*; used after mention of the Prophet Muhammad

(pbuh): *Peace be upon him*; used after mention of any prophet or after mention of Angel Gabriel

(May Allah be pleased with him): used after mention of a male Companion of the Prophet

(May Allah be pleased with her): used after mention of a female Companion of the Prophet

(May Allah be pleased with both of them): used after mention of two Companions of the Prophet

(May Allah be pleased with all of them): used after mention of three or more Companions of the Prophet

About the word *'Lord'*

The word *lord* in English has several related meanings. The original meaning is 'master' or 'ruler', and in this sense it is often used to refer to human beings: 'the lord of the mansion' or '*Lord* So-and-So' (in the United Kingdom, for example). The word *Lord* with a capital L is used in the lexicon of Islam to refer to the One and Only God—Allah. In Islam, there is no ambiguity about the meaning of this word. While it is true that one may occasionally use the word *lord* (whether capitalized or not) to refer to a human being, in Islamic discourse the reference of this term is always clear from the context. Whereas for Christians, Hindus and other polytheists, the word *Lord* with a capital L may refer to Allah, to Jesus or to some imagined deity, for Muslims, there can be no plurality of meaning. Allah alone is the Lord, and the Lord is Allah—not Jesus, not Rama, not any other being.

The Editor

ABOUT THE WORD 'ALLAH'

Although the English word 'God' has often been used interchangeably in this book with the word Allah, there is a difference. 'Allah' is the word in Arabic that is translated as 'God'. However, 'Allah' has a much more precise meaning than 'God'. 'Allah' is not merely an Arabic term for the word 'god'. Instead, the root word of the word 'Allah' is *ilah*, which means 'a god'. There are countless numbers of made-up 'gods', but only One True God, Whose name is Allah. The word 'Allah' literally means 'the worshipped', or 'the God'. Allah is, thus, the proper name for the **only Being that is worthy of worship**, the True Creator of the universe. By saying 'Allah', Muslims are, in essence, negating every other entity which people wrongfully worship. The name 'Allah' is how God Almighty has referred to Himself in the Quran,[1] and how Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) also referred to Him. Therefore, in this work, the term 'Allah' will often be used in reference to this One and Only God Who is worthy of worship.

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1 The Quran is the sacred book or scripture revealed to Prophet Muhammad (bpuh). A detailed explanation of the Quran has been given in Chapter 9: The Six Articles of Islamic Faith.

PREFACE

Wise individuals know that their existence has a purpose and a final destination, whether or not they are aware of the exact nature of that destination. Wise individuals also understand that if they do not know where they are going, they will never strive to reach there. This book has shed some light on the following:

- Why were human beings created?
- What is their final destination?
- How can they reach that destination?

I would like to thank the respected scholars who gave me the chance to learn and quote extensively from their books, especially Dr. Jamal Badawi, Dr. Bilal Philips, Shaykh Ahmed Deedat (may Allah have mercy on him), Dr. Naji Arfaj and Brother Muhammad bin Abdullah Caraballo. Their wonderful works formed the foundation on which I built this book.

With this short preface, I leave you to peruse the book.

Kind regards,

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INTRODUCTION

Every individual is born into a religious environment that is not necessarily in accordance with his or her choice; children are raised to follow the religion or ideology of their family, society or culture. Even as newborn babies, they are assigned either the religion of their family or the ideology of the state; in some countries, the child's assigned religion is even recorded on the birth certificate. By the time individuals reach their teens, they have usually accepted the beliefs of their parents or their particular society. Since these beliefs have come to feel normal to them, they may give no thought to examining and possibly changing them.

However, individuals often encounter, or are exposed to, various beliefs and ideologies throughout the course of their lives, leading many to question long-held beliefs, traditions or philosophical ideas. They begin to question the validity of their own beliefs. Seekers of truth often reach a point of confusion, especially upon realizing that the believers of every religion, sect, ideology and philosophy claim to profess the one and only truth.

There are only three possibilities: 1) everyone is correct, 2) everyone is incorrect, or 3) only one is correct and the rest are incorrect. It is impossible for all of them to be upon the true religion because the main fundamentals of all religions are different. On the other hand, to claim that they are all incorrect is to deny that Allah (the Exalted) revealed His will to humankind. This proposition will seem absurd to those who believe in a Most Wise Creator. After all, why would Allah create human beings and not reveal a way to the truth? So **which religion is the right one, and how can the seeker of truth come to know it?** This question is the main subject of this work.

When beginning the search for the true religion, one should keep in mind the following four things:

Firstly, Allah, the Exalted, has given us the ability and the intellect to discover the answer to this crucial question, which is also a life-changing decision: **What is the true religion?**

Secondly, Allah, the Most Compassionate, has not left us to go astray without any guidance. Indeed, He sent us prophets with scriptures to show us the right path.

Thirdly, we should always remember the underlying reason for this search: the everlasting life to come depends upon adopting the true religion in this life. This should be our ultimate motivation and a driving force to keep us searching until we are completely satisfied.[2]

Fourthly, we can only determine the true path and make a rational and correct decision if we willingly put aside all the emotions and prejudices that often blind us to reality.

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[2] The Bible, in its present form, confirms that seeking the truth is the main cause for salvation. In John 8:32, it is stated, "and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Muslims believe that the existing versions of the Bible contain elements of the original true message, although it has been altered significantly over time.

1. PROOF OF ALLAH'S EXISTENCE

This great universe and everything in it cannot be the product of chance, and it could not have created itself. Signs testifying that Allah is the only Creator can be seen throughout the earth and in the very soul of each person. Allah has said in the Quran:[3]

﴾It is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth and sent down rain from the sky and produced thereby some fruits as provision for you and subjected for you the ships to sail through the sea by His command and subjected for you the rivers. And He subjected for you the sun and moon, continuous [in orbit], and subjected for you the night and the day. And He gave you from all you asked of Him. And if you should count the favours of Allah, you could not enumerate them...﴿ *(Quran 14: 32-34)*[4]

In the Quran, Allah has mentioned how Prophet Abraham tried to show his people the futility of worshipping the creation instead of the Creator. This is an example of how those who follow Allah's signs will be rightly guided to the worship of Him alone.

﴾And thus did We show Abraham the realm of the heavens and the earth that he would be among the certain [in faith]. So when the night covered him [with darkness], he saw a star. He said: This is my lord. But when it set, he said: I like not those that disappear. And when

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[3] The Quran is the sacred book or scripture revealed to Prophet Muhammad (bpuh). More information about the Quran is given in Chapter 9: The Six Articles of Islamic Faith.

[4] The translations of the meanings of the Quranic verses in this book have been taken from Saheeh International, *The Quran: Arabic Text with Corresponding English Meanings*. Please note that any quotation in this book from the Quran is the translation that we feel has the closest meaning to its original Arabic. The translation is not the Quran itself.

he saw the moon rising, he said: This is my lord. But when it set, he said: Unless my Lord guides me, I will surely be among the people gone astray. And when he saw the sun rising, he said: This is my lord; this is greater. But when it set, he said: O my people, indeed I am free from what you associate with Allah. Indeed, I have turned my face toward He Who created the heavens and the earth, inclining toward truth, and I am not of those who associate others with Allah.》

(Quran 6: 75-79)

The strongest proof for Allah's existence is the creation itself. According to the laws of nature as we know them, something cannot be created from nothing; therefore our natural world must have originated from the supernatural. Allah continuously instructs humankind to observe the universe, as this will affirm the divine truth of His existence and His greatness, along with the fact that He alone should be worshipped.

Another obvious fact: **He answers our prayers.** When an individual prays (supplicates) to Allah, He answers his or her prayer; this is an indication of Allah's existence. Allah has said in the Quran:

《And your Lord says: Call upon Me; I will respond to you…》

(Quran 40: 60)

2. THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

Have you ever wondered why we exist? What is the reason for our existence? Have you ever wondered why we die, and where we will go after death? What will happen to us in the end? Have you ever asked yourself why Allah has made the earth, and all that is in it, subservient to human beings? Why were the night and the day, and the sun and the moon created? What are we supposed to do during our lifetime? Were we created just to eat, drink and enjoy ourselves before we die? A poet has summarized this timeless question:

I do not know whence I have come.
I saw my feet walking on the road.
As they please I go and stop.
What am I doing here?
How did the road find me?
I do not know! I do not know! I do not know!

Allah has emphasized in many verses of the Quran that He did not create human beings without a purpose. He has said:

﴾Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?﴿ *(Quran 23: 115)*

﴾Does humankind think that it will be left neglected?﴿ *(Quran 75: 36)*

﴾Do the people think that they will be left to say: We believe—and they will not be tried?﴿ *(Quran 29: 2)*

It is clear from these verses that human beings were not created without a purpose. This purpose has been mentioned clearly in another verse that says:

﴾And I did not create the *jinn*[5] and humankind except to worship Me.﴿ *(Quran 51: 56)*

Hence, the main purpose of creation is **to worship the Creator Alone**. This is called monotheism.

Islam sets a vision for human beings, which is strikingly simple yet completely logical. Indeed, why would the Creator of the universe shroud in mystery the main message that He wants humankind to understand—their one key to winning paradise in the hereafter? How then would He expect humankind to arrive at the truth? It is clear that human beings must revert to their basic instinct regarding the Creator of the universe; they must shed the layers of indoctrinated ideologies and man-made teachings that cover that instinct. Humankind must reclaim its birthright; it must reclaim Islam.

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5 *jinn*: non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire.
Note: Wherever possible, Arabic terms have been translated into English. In cases where we have chosen to retain the Arabic, the transliterated word or phrase is shown in italics the first time it appears in the text; the term is also defined in the glossary found at the end of this book. (Editor)

3. MONOTHEISM: THE MESSAGE OF ALL THE PROPHETS

All the prophets instructed their people to worship Allah alone (monotheism) and to shun worshipping His creation (paganism). Allah has said:

﴾And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger [saying]: Worship Allah and avoid *taghoot*...﴿[6] *(Quran 16: 36)*

Prophet Abraham (pbuh),[7] for example, believed in One God (Allah), Who has no partner. The Quran has explained:

﴾And [We sent] Abraham, when he said to his people: Worship Allah and fear Him. That is best for you, if you should know.﴿ *(Quran 29: 16)*

Allah has also said about him:

﴾And [mention, O Muhammad] when Abraham said to his father and his people: Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship, except for He Who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.﴿ *(Quran 43: 26-27)*

Although the Bible has been altered a great deal, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was reported in the Gospels to have said, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve." (Luke 4:8)[8]

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[6] *taghoot*: idols; anything that is worshipped other than Allah.

[7] This is an expression of respect which Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) recommended that we say each time a prophet is mentioned.

[8] The translations of Bible verses are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV). In a few cases, there was a need to discuss specific wording which is found in the King James Version instead; this is indicated by (KJV).

It also mentions that God has said, "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god." (Isaiah 44:6)

According to the Gospel of Mark, when Jesus (pbuh) was asked what the most important command was, he replied that it was, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." (Mark 12:29)

The Book of Acts 3:13 says, "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus..."[9]

The Quran tells us that Prophet Joseph (pbuh) said to his people:

﴿You worship not besides Him except [mere] names you have named them, you and your fathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority. Legislation is not but for Allah. He has commanded that you worship not except Him. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.﴾ *(Quran 12: 40)*

This is why Allah, the Exalted, has described those who deviate from Abraham's message (of monotheism) as the ones who are fooling themselves. He has said:

﴿And who would be averse to the religion of Abraham except one who makes a fool of himself...?﴾ *(Quran 2: 130)*

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[9] The use of the word 'servant' does not imply that God (Allah) needs assistance or help. A servant here equates to a slave who devotes himself or herself to worship by obeying Allah's commands and shunning what He forbids. See Chapter 11: The Meaning of Worship in Islam.

4. THE BASIC MESSAGE OF ISLAM

The basic message of Islam is the same as the message of all the previous prophets: worship Allah **alone** and avoid worshipping anything besides Him, whether it is a person, place or thing—directly or indirectly, secretly or openly. This basic principle of monotheism is contained in the fifth verse of the opening chapter of the Quran, known as 'The Opening':

﴾It is You we worship and You we ask for help.﴿ *(Quran 1: 5)*

Allah has also said:

﴾Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him…﴿ *(Quran 4: 36)*

﴾…So whoever disbelieves in taghoot and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold, with no break in it…﴿ *(Quran 2: 256)*

Muhammad (bpuh), the last prophet, is reported to have said:

«Anyone who says: There is none worthy of worship other than Allah—and dies holding that belief will be granted paradise.» (Recorded by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)[10]

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[10] *Saheeh al-Bukhari* and *Saheeh Muslim* are two collections of the authentic, documented traditions and sayings of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), as recorded by Imams Bukhari and Muslim respectively. Other collections have also been used as references in this book.

5. PROOFS THAT ONLY ALLAH DESERVES TO BE WORSHIPPED

Here is an obvious fact: **Allah is the sole Creator and Sustainer of everything**. This makes Him the only one deserving of our worship. It's really that simple. Supplication, for example, is an act of worship, where individuals direct their hearts to Allah and specify to Him their needs. Allah has instructed us to call upon Him:

﴾And your Lord says: Call upon Me; I will respond to you…﴿

(Quran 40: 60)

The question then arises: Why do people direct their worship to created objects such as idols? The fact is that the idols have no power of their own; anything which results from that act of worship only comes about through the permission of Allah. When a person prays to an idol and his or her prayers are answered, it is not the idol which actually answers the prayers, but Allah. Similarly, prayers to Jesus Christ (pbuh), Buddha, Krishna, Saint Christopher, Saint Jude or Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) are not answered by them; they are answered by Allah. Consequently, prayer directed to anyone or anything other than Allah is of no avail, and the same applies to all other acts of worship, including charity and fasting. They must all be directed to Allah alone.

The prophets were very explicit in their teachings that only Allah should be worshipped, and they were sent to teach this very message. They claimed neither fame nor status, and never once did they instruct the people to direct acts of worship to them; on the contrary, they warned their people against doing just that. For example, Islam teaches that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was a human being who was created by

Allah in a miraculous way. He was born of a mother, Mary, without a father. He himself was neither God (Allah) nor the son of God, and he worshipped Allah. He was not one of three manifestations of God, as Christians claim; nor was he the son of a prostitute, as some Jews have alleged. He told his people (the tribes of Israel) to worship Allah alone—not to worship either himself or his mother. Furthermore, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) did not direct his acts of worship to himself; he worshipped Allah alone.

Those who claim to be the followers of Jesus Christ actually do something other than what he taught; they worship Jesus himself. Some worship Mary, claiming that she is the mother of God. If Jesus himself did not instruct them (in any location in the Bible) to worship him or his mother (much less a statue or picture of either of them, or a cross), how can they do this very act and yet claim to follow his message?

Allah has said in the Quran:

﴿They have certainly disbelieved who say: Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary—while the Messiah has said: O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed, he who associates others with Allah—Allah has forbidden him paradise, and his abode is the fire. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers.﴾

(Quran 5: 72)

Allah has also warned in the Quran that He will question Prophet Jesus (pbuh) on the Day of Judgement regarding the Christians' worship of him and his mother:

﴿And [beware the day] when Allah will say: O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to the people: Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah? He will say: Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who are Knower of the unseen. I said not

to them except what You commanded me—to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness.》 *(Quran 5: 116-117)*

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was given life; he was born from a woman's womb and was circumcised. He felt hunger, pain and weariness. Since all these attributes are those of human beings and not of God (Allah), it is clear that Jesus was not God (Allah).

Similarly, Buddha was a reformer who introduced a number of humanistic principles into the Hindu religion practiced in India. He did not claim to be God, nor did he suggest to his followers that he should be worshipped. Yet today, most Buddhists have made him their God and they prostrate themselves before idols representing his likeness. Furthermore, over the ages, in the supposedly monotheistic religions like Judaism and Christianity, followers have elevated a select few human beings to the status of law-givers, proclaiming laws that are in direct contradiction to the laws brought by their prophets; this has become the case with their rabbis and church officials. This is a form of worshipping the creation instead of the Creator, Who tells us that:

《They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah...》
(Quran 9: 31)

Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) explained this verse to mean that by unquestioningly obeying them in things which they made lawful or unlawful according to their desires, without any sanction from Allah, they have given these rabbis and priests the status of deities. Briefly, from the perspective of object-worship, all religions today (except Islam) invite people to the worship of creation in one form or another!

It should be noted here that some non-Muslims incorrectly label Islam as 'Mohammedanism.' This phenomenon exists because it is tempting to elevate Muhammad (bpuh) to a status far above his teachings, as in the case of all the other religions. This is ironic since

his very message was the negation of equating human beings (**any** human beings) with Allah. Islam teaches that Muhammad (bpuh) was a human messenger who, like all other human beings, was required to worship Allah rather than be elevated to the status of Allah and be worshipped himself. Muhammad was a messenger **and** a slave of Allah;[11] that is all.

Allah's attributes prove that He alone deserves to be worshipped.

He is One, without relatives; He has no father, son, mother or wife. He is the Eternal Absolute. He neither gives birth nor was born; indeed, there is nothing like Him. He is perfect in His knowledge, in His power, in His will, in His mercy and in all His other attributes. Allah is all-powerful and perfect, while human beings are weak and imperfect. That is how He has defined Himself and how all prophets have defined Him.[12] Therefore, it is only befitting that we direct all acts of worship to the One Who fits this description. Worshipping anything else is futile.

Another proof is the teaching of Islam that every soul has been imbued with the awareness of Allah and with a natural inclination towards worshipping Him alone. In the Quran, Allah has explained that when He created Adam (pbuh), He caused all of Adam's descendants to come into existence; then He took a pledge from all of them, saying:

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[11] The status of a 'slave' of Allah is the most beloved and honoured position before Allah, and this status applies to all of His prophets and true followers. For more details, see Chapter 11: The Meaning of Worship in Islam.

[12] This agrees with what is mentioned in the Gospel of Barnabas, Chapter 17, where Jesus said:

> He alone hath no equal. He hath had no beginning, nor will he ever have an end, but to everything hath He given a beginning, and to everything shall He give an end. He hath no father nor mother; He hath no sons nor brethren nor companions.

(The Gospel of Barnabas is not included in today's Bible, but it is available on the Internet — Editor.)

﴾…Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes, we have testified…﴿ *(Quran 7: 172)*

Allah has then explained why He had all of humankind bear witness that He is their Creator and the only true God, the only one worthy of worship:

﴾…[This]—lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: Indeed, we were of this unaware.﴿ *(Quran 7: 172)*

Allah has further elaborated on this point, saying:

﴾Or [lest] you say: It was only that our fathers associated [others in worship] with Allah before, and we were but descendants after them. Then would You destroy us for what the falsifiers have done?﴿ *(Quran 7: 173)*

Therefore, people who associate partners with Allah in worship cannot claim on that day that they had no idea that Allah is the only one who deserves to be worshipped. (If an individual never received any information about the right religion, though, he or she will be given a chance to accept it on the Day of Judgment.)

Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) reported that Allah has said:

«I created my slaves following the right religion, but the devils made them go astray.» (Recorded by Imam Muslim)

Also, Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) said:

«Each child is born in a state of Islam. Then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Zoroastrian.» (Recorded by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

Thus, Islam is the **birthright** of every human being, since every child is born with a natural belief in the existence of Allah and an inborn inclination towards worshipping Him alone. Just as children submit to the physical laws which Allah has imposed on this physical world, their souls submit naturally to the fact that Allah is the only Lord and Creator. However, if their parents are following a different

path, the children are usually neither strong enough nor aware enough to recognize the truth; even if they do, they cannot resist the will of their parents. In such cases, the religion that the children ultimately follow is in line with their customs and upbringing. However, Allah, the Most Merciful and Compassionate, will not hold them to account or punish them for following a false religion before they reach the age of reason and unless they are exposed to the pure message of Islam.

To sum up, one can naturally, without the aid of other human influences, come to the conclusion that only Allah deserves to be worshipped. This conclusion is neither confusing nor elaborate; it can be arrived at by even the most uneducated. What happens, though, is that human influences often turn people away from this natural belief, which is why it needs to be explained here.

6. THE MESSAGE OF FALSE RELIGIONS

False religions, on the other hand, all teach **the worship of creation (paganism)** in one way or another. Some religions call towards idolatry indirectly, while proclaiming Allah's Oneness; others openly invite people to the worship of other gods along with Allah, instead of calling towards the worship of Allah alone (pure monotheism). Idolatry is the greatest sin that a human being can commit because it diverts worship from the Creator to His creation. It necessarily implies elevating the creation to the status of Allah and thus equating His creation with Him. This explains why idolatry is the greatest sin a human being can commit. Anyone who dies in a state of idolatry has sealed his or her fate in the hereafter.

﴾Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills…﴿ *(Quran 4: 48)*[13]

Human beings should not worship anything or anyone other than Allah. This is because it makes no sense to worship the creation, which is weak in nature, and to neglect the Creator Who controls this creation and the whole universe! Not only is this act misdirected and futile, it is a manifestation of ingratitude to the One Who has created everything. Allah has said in the Quran:

﴾Do they associate with Him those who create nothing and they are [themselves] created? And the false deities are unable to [give] them help, nor can they help themselves. And if you [believers] invite them to guidance, they will not follow you. It is all the same for you whether you invite them or you are silent. Indeed, those you [polytheists] call

[13] The same wording is also found in Quran 4: 116.

upon besides Allah are slaves like you. So call upon them and let them respond to you, if you should be truthful. Do they have feet by which they walk? Or do they have hands by which they strike? Or do they have eyes by which they see? Or do they have ears by which they hear...?》 *(Quran 7: 191-195)*

Some idol worshippers try to justify what they are doing by saying, "We treat idols as mediators and intercessors between Allah and us." This belief is based on the false comparison between Allah and kings, who often operate using mediators between them and their people. This is an incorrect belief because Allah does not need mediators between Him and His creation. Being All-Knowing and not limited by natural boundaries, He hears and knows everything, and He can respond directly to all the needs of His creation. In hundreds of Quranic verses, Allah has invited all human beings to have a direct relationship with Him without any mediator or intercessor; He has prohibited them from worshipping anything other than Him under any circumstances.

The idea of having different deities (idols and statues) as intermediaries and mere 'channels' is as old as time. Many non-Muslims, before the time of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), used to claim that they believed in Allah as the Creator and the Sustainer, but that they used idols merely as a means of drawing closer to Allah or as a means of having prayers answered. This is still a common practice today; many people say that they believe in one God, yet they rely upon statues, superstitions and other symbols (or traditions) as a way to worship and invoke God for their needs.

Allah, the Exalted, has specified that anyone who attributes deity to another along with Him will be left with that other entity on the Day of Judgement, calling on it for help. Individuals falsely hope that these entities will somehow help them when needed. In reality, this is of no avail because the entities will disassociate themselves from the

people on the Day of Judgement (when the people are most in need of help). It will be asked of these people:

﴾…Where are those you used to invoke besides Allah? They will say: They have departed from us—and will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers.﴿ *(Quran 7: 37)*

Allah has said:

﴾Say [O Muhammad]: Invoke those you claim [as deities] besides Allah. They do not possess an atom's weight [of ability] in the heavens or on the earth, and they do not have therein any partnership [with Him], nor is there for Him from among them any assistant.﴿ *(Quran 34: 22)*

So if these entities ﴾do not possess an atom's weight [of ability] in the heavens or on the earth﴿, how can they help the one who worships them? Moreover, Allah has pointed out the simple fact that:

﴾...those you call upon besides Him are unable to help you, nor can they help themselves.﴿ *(Quran 7: 197)*

Allah, the Most Wise, has not prescribed any religious beliefs or rites that would affect the direct relationship between Himself and humans, yet religions such as Hinduism or Buddhism, belief in a human being as a saviour or an intermediary, and rites such as baptism and confession have done just that.

7. ALLAH AND HIS CREATION

Islam emphasizes that Allah and His creation are distinct entities. Allah is not part of His creation, nor does He intermix with it. His creation is neither equal to Him in His attributes nor a part of Him. Indeed, Allah is the Most High; He is above all His creation, above the heavens and above His Throne, as He has informed us about Himself in the Quran and in the previous scriptures.

This might seem obvious, but people's worship of creation instead of the Creator is, to a large degree, based on ignorance or negligence of this fact. The erroneous belief that the essence of Allah is everywhere in His creation, or that He is a part of His creation, is used to justify the worship of Allah's creation. Philosophical idol worshippers justify their idolatry by saying that they do not actually worship the stone or metal object; they only worship Allah, Who becomes concentrated in it during their rituals of worship. They claim that the stone idol is only a focal point for Allah's essence and is not Allah itself! Anyone who accepts the concept of Allah being present in any way within His creation will be obliged to accept this argument to justify idolatry.

Setting aside such motivations as financial gains or fame, people's claims to divinity have largely manifested based on the mistaken belief that it is possible for Allah to be present in humans. Taking this belief one step further, they claim that Allah is more present in them than in others, and people should therefore submit to them and worship them as Allah's incarnate or as Allah concentrated within their person. Similarly, those who have asserted that others were gods have found fertile ground among those who accept the false belief of Allah's presence in human beings.

As far as the doctrine of incarnation held by late Christians is concerned, it was developed after Jesus' departure. It was incorporated into Christianity from paganism. In the mythology that preceded Christianity, it can be seen how some heroes were considered to be gods.

The vast majority of Christians today pray to Jesus, claiming that he is God (Allah). The philosophers among them claim that they are not worshipping Jesus the man; they are only worshipping God (Allah), who was manifest in Jesus the man. This is also the rationale of pagans who bow down to worship the idols. As mentioned before, when a pagan philosopher is asked why he or she worships an idol which was made by human hands, he or she replies that he or she is not really worshipping the idol. Furthermore, he or she may claim that the idol is only a focal point for the presence of Allah, and thereby claim to worship Allah who is manifest in the idol, and not the physical idol itself. There is little or no difference between that explanation and the answer given by Christians for worshipping Jesus. The origin of this deviation lies in the false belief that Allah is present in His creation. Such a belief (erroneously) justifies the worship of Allah's creation.[14]

Islam has freed its followers from such superstitions by rejecting the doctrine of the incarnation.[15] The divinity of Jesus has been rejected in the noble Quran in many verses. Let us take two of them:

﴾They have certainly disbelieved who say: Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary…﴿ *(Quran 5: 72)*

﴾Say: He is Allah, [Who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.﴿ *(Quran 112: 1-4)*

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[14] Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 69.

[15] Incarnation: the belief that God came to Earth in human form and that Jesus was both fully God and fully human. (Christian sects differ on some of the details of this theology.)

These two verses clearly specify that neither Jesus nor any other prophet resembles Allah in an attribute or in essence, and hence, nothing can be an incarnation of Him.

> Consider the following. In the south-eastern region of the Amazon jungle in Brazil, South America, a primitive tribe erected a new hut to house their main idol Skwatoo, representing the supreme God (Allah) of all creation. The following day a young man entered the hut to pay homage to his god. While he was prostrating to what he had been taught was his creator and sustainer, a mangy, old and flea-ridden dog slunk into the hut. The young man looked up just in time to see the dog lift its hind leg and pass urine on the idol. Outraged, the young man chased the dog out of the temple, but when his rage died down, he realized that the idol could not be the Lord of the Universe. He came to the conclusion that God must be elsewhere. As strange as it may seem, the dog urinating on the idol was a sign from God for that young man that his idol did not deserve to be worshipped. This sign contained the divine message that what he was worshipping was false. It liberated him from following his tradition unquestioningly, a tradition that proved to be erroneous. As a result, this man was given a choice: either to seek the true God or to continue in the error of his ways. This example illustrates the fact that humans are capable at arriving at the truth on their own, regardless of society, etc.[16]

Clearly, if one follows this story to its logical conclusion, it means either that God does not have the attributes that He claims to have or that God is no different than His own creation. Both conclusions negate the idea of an All-Powerful God, so both must be false. Islam teaches that God is too great and perfect to lower Himself to the level of likeness to His creation or to mix with His creation.

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[16] Philips, *The True Religion of God*.

To conclude, all false religions share one basic concept with regard to God: that there is no clear distinction between God and His creation. They may claim that all humans are God, that specific individuals are God, that nature is God, that God is a figment of people's imagination, or that a person or other entity is a mediator between people and God (as mentioned in the previous chapter). It may be said that by equating human beings and God, false religions invite humans to worship the creation instead of the Creator.

8. THE MEANING OF THE RELIGION'S NAME: 'ISLAM'

Further evidence that Islam is the true religion comes from the meaning of the word 'Islam' itself. Basically, the word 'Islam' is an Arabic word that denotes submission and obedience. As a religion, Islam has two meanings, one general and one specific.

Islam, in general, refers to the religion which God revealed to all the prophets: the worship of God alone (monotheism) and the avoidance of paganism. This explains why, in the Quran, all prophets have called themselves Muslims. All prophets taught the basic message of Islam (monotheism), and differed only in the detailed message of Islam (Sharia, or "canonical teachings"). Their sincere followers were Muslims as well.[17] Consequently, one should not regard Islam as an innovation that was brought by Prophet Muhammad (bpuh). Instead, it should be regarded as the original message of Allah (in its fundamentals) to all the prophets throughout history.

Specifically, the word 'Islam' refers to the religion that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (bpuh). No other religion was **specifically given** its name by Allah.

Islam was not named after a person or a group of people, nor was its name decided upon by later generations of humans. Indeed, the name 'Islam' was given by Allah Himself, as is clearly mentioned in many verses of the Quran, for example:

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[17] Jesus was reported to have said:

> Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. (Matthew 5:17-18)

﴾Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam…﴿ *(Quran 3: 19)*

On the other hand, Christianity was named (by its followers) after Jesus Christ, and Judaism after the tribe of Judah. It is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible that the religion of the followers of Prophets Isaac and Moses (peace be upon them) and their descendants is called Judaism, or that the religion of the followers of Christ[18] is called Christianity. In other words, the names ‘Judaism’ and ‘Christianity’ had no divine origin or approval. It was not until long after Jesus’ ascension[19] that the name ‘Christianity’ was given to the religion of those claiming to be his followers. The same applies to Buddhism, which was named after Gautama Buddha; Confucianism, named after Confucius; Hinduism, named after ‘Hind’ (the Persian word for India); and so on.

Followers of Christianity and Buddhism are called ‘Christians’ and ‘Buddhists’ because they worship Christ and Buddha, respectively. However, Muslims cannot be called ‘Muhammadans’ because Muslims do not worship Muhammad (bpuh); they worship Allah and submit to Him alone. In fact, this phenomenon of naming an ideology after a person has become so common that many mistakenly label Islam as ‘Mohammedanism’, although Muslims have never used, nor do they accept, such a label.

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[18] Both the names ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’ are derived from Hebrew words, through Greek and Latin. Jesus is the English equivalent and Latin form of the Greek ‘Iesous’, which in Hebrew is ‘Yeshua’. ‘Christos’ is a Greek translation of the Hebrew ‘messiah’ and the Arabic *masaha,* which means to rub, to massage, to anoint.

[19] The Quran has mentioned that Jesus was neither killed nor crucified on a cross; rather, Allah raised him to the heavens, and Jesus will come into this world again before it ends. This has been discussed in detail in Section 14.11: The second coming of Jesus (pbuh).

9. THE SIX ARTICLES OF ISLAMIC FAITH

Islamic belief is based on six fundamental articles of faith.

9.1 Belief in Allah

This includes the following beliefs:

- Belief in Allah's existence: The existence of humankind and the entire universe is not a mere accident or the product of chance. The universe and everything that is in it manifests and points to the certainty of there being a Creator.
- Belief that Allah is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Owner of the universe and its contents, the provider of everything, the Giver of life and the Causer of death.
- Belief that Allah is the only One Who has the right to be worshipped.
- Allah has revealed, both in His final revelation, the Quran and through his Prophet's teachings, ninety-nine names and attributes. They offer some insight into the absolutely unique, wondrous and perfect nature of Allah. The most frequently used name is Allah, which means 'the Worshipped'. Some of those attributes are: the Everlasting, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, Self-Sufficient and Self-Sustaining. Allah Almighty is above all comprehension, and He does not resemble His creation, as He has said in the Quran:

  ﴾…There is nothing like unto Him…﴿ *(Quran 42: 11)*

  He has also said:

﴾Say: He is Allah, [Who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.﴿ *(Quran 112: 1-4)*

He is the most Rich, free of all needs. He has said in the Quran:

﴾And I did not create the jinn and humankind except to worship Me. I do not want from them any provision, nor do I want them to feed Me. Indeed, it is Allah who is the [continual] Provider, the firm possessor of strength.﴿ *(Quran 51: 56-58)*

Allah's ninety-nine names and attributes have all been mentioned in the Quran and the statements of the Prophet (bpuh).

9.2 Belief in the angels

Angels are creatures created by Allah for specific functions. They are normally invisible and have no free will; they do as Allah commands them. They should not be worshipped. The angel Gabriel (pbuh) was responsible for conveying the revelation to the prophets. Two angels are assigned to every human being to record their good and evil deeds. Another angel accompanies each human being, encouraging him or her to do good deeds. Others blow the human spirit into the foetus four months after conception; yet others take the human spirit at the time of its death, by Allah's permission. There are other angels that have various responsibilities, too many to enumerate in this small book.[20]

There are two main points of difference between the Islamic and the Christian views of angels. In Islamic teachings, angels are noble and free of sin, yet righteous Muslims hold a greater status in the eyes of Allah. The angels were commanded to bow to Adam (pbuh) due to his superior knowledge, and they all did as they were commanded. Christians, on the other hand, believe that angels are of two kinds:

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[20] For more detail, see al-Uthaymeen, *Explanation of the Three Fundamental Principles of Islaam*.

good/obedient and evil/disobedient. That is how they justify their belief that Satan is a 'fallen angel'—an evil angel who disobeyed God.

According to Islamic belief, both angels and human beings are creatures of Allah, and both are obliged to worship Him. Angels have no choice, though; they worship Allah and never disobey Him, so they commit no sins. Thus, the second main point of difference between the Christian and Islamic views of angels is that of free will. Whereas angels have no free will, human beings do, so humans might choose to obey Allah, be sinful, or follow some commandments and disobey others.

9.3 Belief in the scriptures

This article of faith refers to belief in all the scriptures as revealed in their original form by Allah to His messengers. Revealed scriptures form the enlightenment which the messengers received to show the right path of Allah to their people. All the revealed books call to the worship of Allah alone, and they forbid the worship of anything in place of or in addition to Him. They contain guidance for humankind in all aspects of life. They define right and wrong, and they offer human beings a complete system of beliefs and practices to govern all their affairs. The Creator alone knows best what is beneficial for His creation and what is not. Thus, the divine laws contained in those scriptures command and prohibit various acts and substances in order to protect the human spirit, human body, and human society from harm. Human beings need to abide by Allah's commandments, as documented in His revealed books, in order to fulfil their potential by living a righteous life.

The original texts of the revealed books do not differ from each other in their main doctrinal principles. However, due to the differences among nations in terms of time and place, there were some differences in the practical teachings (laws) of the scriptures, according to the wisdom of Allah. Their basic message, however, remains the same.

Muslims believe in the previous books as mentioned in the Quran: the Scripture of Abraham (pbuh), the Torah of Moses (pbuh), the Psalms of David (pbuh) and the Gospel of Jesus (pbuh). The following verse from the noble Quran emphasizes the fact that belief in all the previous scriptures sent by Allah is an integral part of the Islamic belief system:

﴾Say [O believers]: We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.﴿ *(Quran 2: 136)*

Long before the coming of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), all of these scriptures had been either lost or irrevocably corrupted by later generations over the centuries, with myths, superstitions, idolatry and irrational philosophical beliefs. The existing forms of those scriptures contain contradictions and hence cannot be described as Allah's revelation.

The Bible, for example, is composed of many books written by various authors. The scripture that was revealed to Jesus (pbuh) has undergone so many changes that today we have the four well-known Gospels instead of one Gospel.

> These were written between 40 and 115 years after Jesus (peace be upon him) had left and are based on documents that have been lost. The Gospel according to Mark, was the first one written in Rome, at least 40 years after the disappearance of Jesus (peace be upon him). The Gospel according to Matthew was written in the Greek Language about 90 years after Christ. The Gospel according to Luke was written in Greece approximately 80 years after Christ. These three Gospels are called Synoptic because they originate from the same lost document and they have a lot in common. The

Gospel according to John, on the other hand, has deep differences with the Synoptic Gospels. It is in this Gospel of John where the Divinity and pre-existence of Jesus (peace be upon him) was mentioned, even though Jesus himself never claimed this. This Gospel was written between the years 10 and 115 CE.[21]

Analysis of these Gospels reveals the following:

1. There exist no written documents dating from the period of Jesus' lifetime that record his sayings, actions or lectures.
2. The first records of the sayings of Jesus (pbuh), which were made close to the time of his disappearance, have been lost.
3. The Gospels were written 40-115 years after Jesus' 'disappearance' and were based on documents that have since been lost. As a consequence, there was a loose manipulation of the content.
4. None of the Gospel writers ever knew, saw or heard Jesus (pbuh).
5. The Gospels were written in Greek, whereas Jesus (pbuh) spoke Aramaic; since they do not record his original speech, they cannot be the words of Allah.
6. For at least one hundred years after the Gospels were written, they did not have any canonical authority. During this time, writers from different sects changed them in order to suit their own agendas.
7. The present Gospels, seen as a whole, are full of contradictions.[22]

These factors have been brought up here in order to demonstrate that the Gospel of Jesus (pbuh), his original message that was revealed by Allah, has not reached us in its original form. It can be affirmed that the four Gospels included in today's Bible cannot be considered

[21] Abdul Razak, *Study Guide, Comparative Study — Islam and Christianity*.

[22] Source for points 1-7: Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Led Me to Islam*, 14-15.

equivalent, or even similar, to the inspired message given to Jesus (pbuh). Based on these historical facts, these four Gospels should be treated as historical books which comprise the bulk of the New Testament, not as the true scripture (word of Allah) that was revealed to Jesus.

Biblical proofs of the Bible's distortion

1. The Old Testament itself clearly testifies that it was altered by humans. God (Allah) is quoted as saying:

   How can you say, 'We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us'? But behold, **the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie**. (Jeremiah 8:8)

2. Dr. Bilal Philips has explained:

   About five years after the end of Jesus' ministry, a young rabbi by the name of Saul of Tarsus, who claimed to have seen Jesus in a vision, began to change Jesus' way. Paul (his Roman name) had considerable respect for Roman philosophy and he spoke proudly of his own Roman citizenship. His conviction was that non-Jews who became Christians should not be burdened with the Torah[23] in any respect. The author of Acts 13:39 quotes Paul as saying: And by him every one that believes is freed from everything which you could not be freed by the Law of Moses. It was primarily through the efforts of Paul that the Church began to take on its non-Jewish character. Paul wrote most of the New Testament letters (epistles), which the Church accepts as the official doctrine and inspired Scripture. These letters do not preserve the Gospel of Jesus or even represent it, instead, Paul transformed the teachings of Christ into a Hellenic (Greco-Roman) philosophy.[24]

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[23] As mentioned earlier, the Torah was the book revealed to Prophet Moses.

[24] Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 81.

3. The clearest evidence of biblical distortion is the revision of the Bible to the extent that it can be said that every edition is different from the previous one.

Based on these facts, and the lack of authentication in documenting the original text of the Bible, it can easily be concluded that the Bible in its present form is no more than a collection of historical books written by various writers over many years. The accounts of the life of Jesus after his ascension were written by men who never met him. (They are named as Mark, Matthew, Luke and John, although their actual identities are not known.) The current version(s) of the Bible does not represent the original (one) Bible and cannot be described as the word of God (Allah).

Distorting revelations is the biggest sin

The Quran has emphasized, in more than one verse, that distorting Allah's revelation is a severe sin.

﴾So woe to those who write the 'scripture' with their own hands, then say: This is from Allah—in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn.﴿ *(Quran 2: 79)*

An important note

It should be noted that those who followed the scriptures when they were in their pure and unadulterated forms are considered to be on the right religion; they will have nothing to fear on the Day of Judgement.

Revelation of the Quran

Following the distortion of the previous scriptures, Allah, the Most Compassionate, did not leave human beings to go astray without an unadulterated reference. Indeed, He revealed the Quran as the final revelation to humankind, and He promised to preserve it for all time.

It is the word of Allah, which He revealed to Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) through the angel Gabriel (pbuh). It was revealed in parts (fragments) of different lengths over a period of twenty-three years. Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) recited the revelation to his Companions, who wrote it down during his lifetime on palm leaves, parchment, animal bones (the shoulder-blades of camels made a good writing surface), and flat stones. When he recited it to them, he indicated precisely where each revealed section belonged within the body of the complete revelation. In addition, the Quran was memorized by hundreds of Prophet Muhammad's Companions. One year after the death of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), the first caliph, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), instructed the Prophet's Companions to collect the whole Quran in one volume. Later, the third caliph, Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), prepared several copies from the original text and sent them to the major centres of the Islamic civilization. One of these seven reproductions can still be found in Istanbul, Turkey.

From that time onwards, for more than 1400 years, the same Quranic text has been in use, with the exact same wording, order and language (Arabic). Not a single word of its 114 chapters, 6200 verses, and approximately 80,000 words has been changed since it was revealed. Indeed, Allah has promised to preserve it forever:

﴾Indeed, it is We who sent down the Quran and indeed, We will be its guardian.﴿ *(Quran 15: 9)*

Just ponder over the fact that the Quran, in its entirety, is memorized by millions of people, regardless of age, sex, social class, or ethnicity! It is the only book that has been thus preserved, not only on the shelf but in the hearts of humankind.

The Quran supersedes all previous scriptures. Allah has said to Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) about it:

﴾And We have revealed to you [O Muhammad] the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the scripture and as a criterion over it…﴿ *(Quran 5: 48)*

An essential point to understand about the Quran is that it is a miracle in terms of both its revelation and its content. Since the time of its revelation, there have been those who denied the divine and miraculous nature of the Quran, saying that Muhammad (bpuh) was either taught by others or that he wrote it by himself! In order to counteract this claim, Allah has presented a challenge to the whole of humankind:

﴾And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our slave [Muhammad], then produce a chapter the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful.﴿ *(Quran 2: 23)*

This is one of the prophecies which the Quran accurately foretold, for no one, from the time of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) until this day, has been able to produce the like of one chapter or even one verse of the Quran. As such, Muslims do not need any other scriptures to base their faith on, either fully or partially. The Quran remains clear and easily understood by anyone who has a good command of the Arabic language, and when the meanings of its words are translated into any of the world's other languages, all of its legal injunctions and instructions are clear.

The entire Quran is a proclamation of monotheism

1. Some of the verses inform us about Allah: His names, attributes, acts and speech. Those verses indicate the Oneness of Allah with respect to His most excellent names, essence, and perfect attributes.

2. Other verses point to the necessity of worshipping Allah alone, without any associate or partner, and of renouncing the worship of anything other than Him. These verses indicate the focus of worship and the necessity for people to single out their Lord in their intentions, in requesting His aid, and in turning to Him in repentance, for example.
3. The Quran also contains injunctions and prohibitions; doing something that has been enjoined or refraining from what has been prohibited is the fulfilment and perfection of the affirmation of the Oneness of Allah.
4. The Quran includes stories and information about prophets and other righteous people of true and sincere belief. It tells about their immediate rewards in the life of this world as well as the immense rewards reserved for them in the hereafter.
5. The Quran also contains stories about those who associate partners with Allah. It describes their punishment in this life and the punishment they are promised in the hereafter. These are the just deserts for those who deviate from the affirmation of Allah's Oneness.

The Prophet's teachings

The teachings of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) are the second source of Islamic knowledge after the noble Quran. They explain and elaborate on the Quranic verses. They also explain, in minute detail, the manner of worship as performed by the Prophet (bpuh). The Prophet's statements provide further clarification and details as to how to fulfil what Allah has ordered and refrain from what He has forbidden. These teachings have been meticulously collected and reported by the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

Preservation of Islamic teachings

Preventing Islamic teachings from alteration does not stop at the preservation of the Quranic text; rather, it is also forbidden to introduce into the Prophet's guidance (by saying or writing) anything that is contrary to its premise, values or teachings.

The Prophet (bpuh) said:

«Whoever introduces into this matter (the Islamic teachings) something that does not belong to it, shall find it rejected.» (Recorded by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

«One of the Prophet's Companions said: The Prophet (bpuh) gave us a highly effective admonition, such that many of us were tearful and felt our hearts shudder.

Someone said to him: O, Messenger of Allah! This sounds like the admonition of someone bidding his audience farewell. Please outline for us what you recommend.

The Prophet (bpuh) said: I urge you to always remain conscious of Allah (God-fearing), and to listen to and obey your leaders, even if the leader is an Abyssinian slave. Any of you who lives long will witness much strife and conflict, so hold tight to my way and the way followed by the Rightly-Guided Caliphs.[25] Hold on to it and bite it with your molars (do not let go of it), and steer away from any innovation (in religious affairs and laws), for such innovations are deviations (from the right path).» (An authentic hadith recorded by Imams Ibn Hibban, Abu Dawood and at-Tirmidhi)[26]

Thus, in matters of religion, one is not permitted to change fundamental principles of Islamic teachings. Whatever is contrary to them is wrong and unacceptable. With this strict protection, Islam

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[25] He meant specifically the four caliphs who came after him.

[26] hadith: a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers.

has been kept as it was revealed, pure from myths and superstitions as well as from changes that reflect the whims of people and leaders.

9.4 Belief in the messengers of Allah

Allah has conveyed His message through prophets and messengers, individual human beings who were selected by Allah to be examples of how the scriptures were to be understood and implemented. Prophets demonstrated practically, for their followers, how they should live in accordance with the law. The way of the prophets is the only way to Allah, because it is the way prescribed by Allah Himself. Without prophets, people would not know Allah, His attributes or how to worship Him.

The role of the prophets can be summarized as follows:

1. Receive the message from Allah.
2. Deliver this message to the people.
3. Advise people to fear Allah and abide by His commandments.
4. Advise people who have deviated, disobeyed Allah, or worshipped anything or anyone other than Him, to repent and to obey and worship Him only.
5. Inform people about the fundamental aspects of faith.
6. Teach detailed religious and moral tenets to their followers.
7. Be a model for their people, and lead them to eternal paradise.

Allah, the Exalted, has sent a prophet or prophets to every nation; their duty was to convey the message that He alone should be worshipped and that worshipping anything instead of or along with Him is false and unacceptable. The Quran and Hadith have mentioned twenty-seven prophets (see Illustration 1), while indicating that many others existed but were not mentioned by name. The first of these prophets was Adam, and the last was Muhammad (bpuh). May Allah's mercy and peace be upon all the prophets.

Every prophet was sent to a specific people and a specific era. For example, in the present day Bible, Jesus says, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matthew 15:24)

Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) was an exception in that he was sent as the last and final messenger until the hour of judgement. The proofs that Muhammad (bpuh) was a messenger of Allah are innumerable, and all have been mentioned in detailed biographical material about his life. The greatest proof is the miracle of the Quran, which could not have been written by any human and could not have been conveyed by anyone other than a Messenger of Allah (bpuh).

Indeed, the books of the Bible mention the coming of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), in spite of the changes which have been introduced in their content.[27]

The Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) relate, with reverence, the lives of many of these prophets. Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), the last prophet, remains the absolute example for his followers, and his teachings were further elucidated through the practice of his Rightly-Guided successors. The Prophet (bpuh) continuously encouraged his followers to follow the way of the prophets, and he warned against conflict over Islamic principles and values. This was to ensure that his followers would not deviate from the right path, as did the followers of previous prophets.

Prophet Muhammad’s followers owe him two things: obedience and love.

Obedience to the Prophet (bpuh)

Obedience to the Prophet (bpuh) has been mentioned in thirty different verses of the Quran. It implies following his commands and avoiding what he prohibited. Obedience to the Prophet (bpuh) indicates the true

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[27] This will be discussed in Chapter 15: The Amazing Prophecies of Muhammad (bpuh) in the Bible.

fulfilment of the second part of the declaration that brings a person into Islam, "I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger."

When we examine what the Prophet (bpuh) encouraged, urged or ordered, we find that it is all from Allah and that it leads to something good—for us personally, for others who are close to us, for our families or for our wider community, whether it is the Muslim community in general or humanity at large. He has only prohibited what is harmful or of no benefit, such as adultery, gambling, drinking alcohol, lying, being disrespectful to parents, and so on. In many statements, the Prophet (bpuh) prohibited satanic ways such as these because these tend to pull a person away from the right path.

Good believers reach a state of mind in which their desires and pleasures in this life are in line with what Allah wants from them. Every individual should be obedient to Allah and His Prophet (bpuh) and should strictly observe the instructions from Allah. One's faith develops and grows through following Islamic teachings and performing acts of worship, whereas it decays and suffers from a spiritual loss if these teachings and acts of worship are abandoned.[28]

Loving the Prophet (bpuh)

Islam teaches that loving the Prophet is part of the Islamic faith. The Prophet (bpuh) has been quoted as saying:

«None of you is a true believer unless I am dearer to him than his parents, his children, and all other people.» (Recorded by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet (bpuh) also said:

«There are three qualities which are certain to give anyone the sweetness of faith: to love Allah and His Messenger more than anyone else, to love a person for no purpose other than for Allah's sake, and

[28] Compiled from Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Christ Led Me to Islam.*

to hate to relapse into disbelief after Allah has saved him from it as much as one would hate to be thrown into the fire.» (Recorded by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

We are required to love Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) more than all others (except Allah) because it was through him that we learned Who Allah is, along with His attributes, our position in relation to Him, what He wants from us, and how to worship Him. The Prophet (bpuh) has guided us, through practical examples, along the way; following him is certain to earn us Allah's acceptance and the ultimate bliss. He has spared us the worst calamity that can ever befall anyone, which is incurring Allah's anger and punishment. He sacrificed everything—his health, his wealth and his whole life—to deliver Allah's message to us. If we realize all this, how can we not love him more than we love ourselves and all others?

We love Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) because he was, as described in the Quran, a 'mercy for all nations'. His compassion extended to all, whether they were friends and enemies. Consider this: his enemies often had a change of heart and became his beloved Companions and followers. They embraced Islam, saying that his character proved he was a true Messenger of Allah (bpuh).

It should be noted that we must love Allah more than we love the Prophet (bpuh); the Prophet (bpuh) comes only after Allah. Loving Allah, the Prophet (bpuh) and his followers is an act of worship for which we will be rewarded. The reverse is also true: hating Allah or His Prophet (bpuh) will expel us from the bounds of Islam. Correspondingly, hating those who hate Allah or the Prophet (bpuh) is part of Islamic belief, for which we will be accounted and rewarded.

It needs to be clarified here that the emotion of 'hate' that is referred to in this context is not the commonly known, evil type of hate which is an imperfect human emotion; rather, it is the type of hate that perfects one's faith when directed—in the right measure—

against those who take a defiant stance against the Creator and His chosen messengers. It is a lot like the negative feeling one has towards the actions of a person who defies and abuses his or her elderly parents in an evil manner, or towards the efforts of an outlaw who fights the justice system and spreads fear and corruption in society. It is clear that hating the actions of such individuals is a natural feeling that good people are expected to have. Although Islam teaches love in all its forms, it also instructs faithful believers not to love those who do not love Allah and His messengers, until they change their ways—in which case, they are commanded to love them! In a nutshell, a Muslim loves as well as hates for Allah's sake. Here is an important fact about this emotion of hate: a Muslim is instructed not to hate anyone for personal reasons. If a Muslim is insulted by anyone, he or she is encouraged to forgive; surely, there is a great difference between hate for the sake of Allah (a well-placed emotion) versus hate for self-satisfaction (a destructive emotion).

The love we should have for the Prophet (bpuh) must be genuine love, not a mere verbal statement. It should be supported and proven by our obedience: following his commands and avoiding what he prohibited. Keep in mind that expressing our feelings of hate or revulsion at the refusal of our fellow human beings to believe in Allah's Oneness and to follow the monotheistic teachings of His prophets should be part of a positive and pro-active approach to those who disbelieve. We pray for them to be guided to the truth; at the same time, we need to work for that and work with them towards that.

9.5 Belief in the Last Day

Islam teaches that this life is only a test of conduct for each of us, to see whether or not we will follow the commands of Allah. In the

hereafter, we all will be resurrected to stand before Allah for a just reckoning of the deeds and actions we performed during our life on this earth. People with good deeds will be generously rewarded and warmly welcomed to Allah's heaven, but those whose records are overwhelmed with bad deeds will be punished and cast into hell. We have been given knowledge of right and wrong, instinctively and through revelation; we must choose our path in this short life. Our choices in this life will ultimately determine our places in the eternal life to come. Allah has said in the Quran:

《So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.》 *(Quran 99: 7-8)*

Belief in the Day of Judgement causes the consciousness of Allah to be implanted in the human heart. It impels individuals and society at large to obey Him sincerely, without any external pressure. In effect, the hereafter for an individual starts right after his or her soul departs from the body. Shortly after the burial, two angels come to the grave and ask the following three questions (like a final examination):

Who is your Lord?

What is your religion?

Who is your prophet?

Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) said that the believer (one who believes in all six articles of faith) will not have any difficulty answering these questions correctly, while the unbeliever will not be able to do so. Depending upon the result, the deceased will begin either to suffer or to enjoy his or her stay in the grave, which will either expand (to give comfort to) or contract (to torture) its occupant. (As narrated in hadiths recorded by Imams Bukhari and Ahmad)

9.6 Belief in predestination

This includes the following beliefs:

a. Allah knows everything. His knowledge is not bound by time; the past, present and future are all known to Him.

b. Everything that takes place is already written in a book called the ‘Preserved Tablet’.

c. Allah has created everything, including our actions, both good and bad. He has commanded us to do good deeds, though, and has forbidden us from doing evil; hence we will be rewarded or punished based on our choice of good or bad actions.

d. Everything that happens in this universe is happening with Allah’s permission, and nothing can take place against His will.

It should be noted that Allah’s prior knowledge is not the same as control; it does not mean that we human beings have no free will. We choose, but Allah knows beforehand what choices we will make and what actions we will take. He merely **allows** us to follow through with our decisions.

10. THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

Worship in Islam is an all-inclusive term encompassing all of the actions and statements that Allah loves and approves of. Every virtuous action that is performed with the intention of carrying out His commandments and seeking His pleasure is considered to be an act of worship. Islam is built on five acts of worship that make up the foundation from which all other deeds emanate. These five pillars have a high importance in Islam; learning and practicing them are priorities for every Muslim, whereas everything else can be learned gradually, with patience and dedication. These five pillars stand as the framework of spiritual life, on which the structure of Islam rests:

a) The declaration of the two testimonies of faith

"I testify that there is no deity[29] worthy of worship except Allah, and I testify that Muhammad (bpuh) is His slave and messenger."[30]
The sincere declaration of this double testimony (also referred to as the testimony of monotheism) and adherence to this teaching automatically brings one into the fold of Islam, and dying while believing it guarantees a place in paradise. That is why this testimony is considered to be the cornerstone of Islam. The acceptance of this belief distinguishes the Muslim from the non-Muslim, so all actions depend upon this pillar; good deeds (no matter how great) are of no

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[29] deity: an object of worship.

[30] In Arabic: *Ash-hadu al-la ilaha illa Allah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan Abduhu wa Rasooluhu.*

avail to anyone who does not utter this testimony. On the other hand, there are many actions that contradict this declaration, automatically taking one outside the fold of Islam. The most serious of those acts is worshipping other than Allah, whether through supplication, prayer or any other act that signifies worship or belief in an entity other than Allah.

b) Prayers

Formal prayers are prescribed five times daily as a duty to Allah, the Exalted, at the following times: dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and nightfall. A Muslim may offer formal prayers almost anywhere, as long as the location is clean. Muslim males are enjoined to pray in congregation in a mosque, while females are encouraged to pray in their homes. Prayer provides people with regular contact with Allah, which helps them avoid evil. Furthermore, it is symbolic of equality among the poor and the rich, the ruler and the subjects, the dark-skinned and the fair-skinned. Human beings from every conceivable background stand together, united in rows, shoulder to shoulder, prostrating themselves before Allah. Prayer strengthens the belief in Allah and elevates people to a higher morality. It helps to purify the heart and to prevent them from giving in to temptation to engage in wrongdoing and evil. This act of worship compels the believers to remember their Lord night and day, no matter where they are. These prayers take place continuously, so that at any given moment, people are praying somewhere in the world.

c) Zakah (obligatory charity)

Every Muslim whose net annual savings are above a certain specified minimum must pay 2.5% of those savings annually to the poor and

the needy people in the community.[31] Zakah fosters generosity and helps purify the soul of selfishness and greed. Zakah also helps reduce resentment and envy between the poor and the rich members of the society. Islam is a practical religion. Not only does it safeguard the average individual and his or her rights, it protects the rights of the weaker members of the community as well.

d) Fasting the month of Ramadan

In Islam, fasting means abstinence from food, drink and sexual relations from dawn to sunset. It is an annual obligation during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Fasting was imposed on former communities of believers in earlier divine religions. The Quran states that the main purpose of fasting is to help us be more conscious of Allah and more obedient to Him. It teaches sincerity and engenders devotion. It helps us develop a sense of social conscience, patience, self-restraint, will power and compassion for needy members of the society.

Someone might ask: Why has Allah, in His wisdom, prescribed fasting for many nations?

The answer is that the purpose of fasting is clearly defined as being for the development of Allah-consciousness (piety) in the believer's heart, since only Allah knows who is actually fasting and who is not. Consequently, the one who is fasting refrains from eating and drinking based on an awareness of Allah. Regular fasting enhances that awareness, which subsequently leads to the implanting of righteousness in the heart of the individual.

As a secondary benefit, fasting is very good for one's health. It purifies the body of toxins; it is a rest from the useless waste cluttering

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[31] There are also different amounts due for livestock, crops, inventory, etc.; the details are beyond the scope of this book.

the body. It allows the body to recuperate and heal. It trains the body, as well as the mind, to function with an amount of food that is sufficient. Also, the needs of basic instincts of survival are kept in check, and when the individual is able to control these, other needs are easier to control. In return for this sacrifice, Allah grants the believers great rewards and forgives their sins.

e) Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah)

The Hajj is obligatory for every Muslim once in a lifetime, if one can afford it financially and bear it physically. During the Hajj, Muslims from all corners of the world meet in an international congregation dedicated to the worship of Allah. The Hajj lasts for days (not including travel to and from Makkah), during which several million pilgrims perform certain rites in specific places at specific times; as such, it is a great lesson in patience but also brings magnificent spiritual rewards. The huge gatherings for the Hajj are a reminder of the Day of Judgement, when all of humankind will gather for their reckoning. It emphasizes the belief that all Muslims are brothers and sisters, irrespective of their geographical, cultural, racial or social origins.

11. THE MEANING OF WORSHIP IN ISLAM

The meaning of worship is, simply, total submission and complete obedience to Allah's commandments in belief, intentions, statements and actions. This is achieved by striving to do what Allah has encouraged, avoiding what He has forbidden, and worshipping Him alone, according to His teachings. This is the true meaning of **worship** of Allah or 'slavery to Allah' in Islam, and this state applies to all of the messengers and true followers of Allah. May He enable all of His followers to achieve this level of worship.

12. THE MORAL SYSTEM IN ISLAM

Islam has unique moral teachings that call for strengthening the relationship between humans and their Lord, as well as with one another. They also call for us to correct and improve ourselves, both inwardly and outwardly.

12.1 Relation with the Lord

In the Quran, Allah calls us to correct and strengthen our relationship with Him and to draw close to Him through spiritual and physical acts of worship such as prayer, Hajj, supplication, and charity. In addition, the Quran calls us to seek knowledge about Allah through His names and attributes. This instils fear and awe of the Lord in our hearts and establishes discipline in applying Allah's commands and prohibitions.

The Prophet (bpuh) also instructed us to remember Allah at all times and in every situation. This creates a permanent connection between our Lord and us, and it instils stability, strength and tranquility in our hearts. It is one means of protecting against evil and vice, since Muslims will be reminded constantly that Allah is watching their every action. The Prophet (bpuh), for example, taught specific invocations to be uttered when going to sleep, before entering the lavatory, before sexual intercourse, while travelling, when in fear, upon entering or leaving the house, the first thing in the morning and in the afternoon, when afflicted by distress, anxiety or misfortune, when burdened by debt or poverty, upon entering a graveyard, when stopping for a rest or setting up camp, and in many other situations.

12.2 Relations with people — general

The Quran promotes behaviour that strengthens and reinforces social relationships; for example, it places great importance on the role of the family. Treating parents kindly, maintaining good relations with other family members, seeing to the rights and needs of spouses and children and dealing with them with love and mercy, and supporting orphans and the weaker members of society are all obligatory. Conversely, disobeying parents, severing family ties, neglecting or abusing spouses and children, and isolating oneself are all prohibited.

In addition, the Quran teaches that we should treat others with high moral behaviour and noble manners. We are encouraged to smile, forgive, return harm with good, and have patience when dealing with others. Since this high code of moral behaviour can be quite trying, Allah has promised immense rewards for those who achieve it.

The Prophet (bpuh) instructed us to adopt good manners when in gatherings, such as not raising our voices, respecting elders, being gentle with youngsters, and greeting those present by saying *Assalamu alaykum wa rahmatuallah wa barakatuhu* (May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you). Islam also demands that we guard our tongues against saying negative things about others, even if what we want to say is true.

Islam also enjoins that agreements and contracts be fulfilled, entrusted items returned, and rulers obeyed. It enjoins noble characteristics just as it forbids vileness, baseness, crime, oppression, hostility, aggression and all other blameworthy and reprehensible qualities.

12.3 Relations with parents

Islam highly recommends kindness to parents. This command is mentioned eight times in the Quran. In one of the verses, Allah said to Prophet Muhammad (bpuh):

﴾And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], 'uff', and do not repel them, but speak to them a noble word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say: My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small.﴿ *(Quran 17: 23-24)*

«A man asked Prophet Muhammad (bpuh): Whom should I honour most?

The Prophet (bpuh) replied: Your mother.

Then the man questioned: And who comes next?

The Prophet (bpuh) answered: Your mother.

Then the man inquired again: And who comes next?

The Prophet responded: Your mother.

Then the man queried again: And who comes next?

The Prophet replied: Your father.» (Recorded by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

12.4 Relations with relatives

Kindness towards relatives has been promoted by most major religions, but Islam takes this aspect to a new dimension. We are obliged to assist our relatives by economic as well as social means. Relatives have specific rights laid out by the Sharia (Islamic law); these are based on the nearness of the blood relationship. This can be seen mostly in the rights of inheritors, which are specifically laid out in the Quran. Certain relatives receive shares of the inheritance, and

a Muslim may bequeath up to one-third of the estate to relatives who are not assigned a share. When it comes to charity, one must fulfil the rights of relatives before donating money to others.

Muslims must treat all relatives—whether or not they are Muslims—with utmost respect and kindness; they must not boycott their relatives or to cut off relations with them. They are encouraged to stay in contact even if these relatives abandon them. Indeed, maintaining family ties is of such great importance that Muslims are rewarded greatly for doing any good actions that promote this.

12.5 Relations with neighbours

Islam encourages treating neighbours very kindly. There is a verse in the Quran that sums this all up:

﴾...and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler...﴿ *(Quran 4: 36)*

Also, the Prophet (bpuh) said:

«(The angel) Gabriel continued to urge me to treat neighbours kindly and politely, to the extent that I thought he would order me to make them my heirs.» (Recorded by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet (bpuh) also said:

«Anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour, and anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day should entertain guests generously, and anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day should say what is good or keep quiet.» (Recorded by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

One of the Prophet's neighbours used to throw trash on him regularly as he passed by. Once, when she did not do this, he inquired about her, concerned that something was wrong. He found her ill in

bed, and when she thought he would display anger or vengeance, she was surprised to find him merciful, despite her rude behaviour towards him. She then embraced Islam because of his kindness. Remember, kindness to neighbours is rewarded by Allah.

12.6 Food — moral conduct

The Prophet (bpuh) taught many practical good manners, including the virtue of adopting the correct manners for eating and drinking. These include eating with your right hand and being satisfied with the food rather than finding fault with it. If you like the food, you should eat it, but if you have no appetite for it, simply leave it in the dish without criticizing it. This is both out of respect for the blessing of the food and in order to avoid hurting the feelings of the person who has cooked and/or offered it. It is also preferred to eat with others and not alone, either by eating with your family or by inviting a poor person to join you. Say *Bismillah* (In the name of Allah [I start]) before beginning to eat, and say *Alhamdulillah* (All praise belongs to Allah) after the meal, in order to remember the blessing that you have been given and also the One Who provided it. The Prophet (bpuh) prohibited people from blowing on food or drink or breathing onto it, out of respect for others who may be sharing it and to avoid the spread of contagious diseases.

12.7 Hygiene — Islamic moral conduct

Islam also enjoins both physical and spiritual cleanliness. It encourages us to keep our bodies clean, along with our clothes and shoes. Islam has guided Muslims for our own well-being, down to the minute details. For example, we are encouraged to wash thoroughly after using the toilet, to clean the teeth often (especially with the *siwak*, a natural toothbrush), and to shower after sexual relations.

12.8 Spiritual — Islamic moral conduct

In regard to spiritual purity, the Quran instructs us to straighten and correct our souls and to purify our hearts from spite, malice, jealousy, pride and inequity. The Quran calls for integrity of the heart and for love, affection and humility towards people. It instructs us to purify our tongues from lying, backbiting, slander and insult. We should then replace them with truthfulness and softness in speech. Islam encourages unity, so much so that we should give as many excuses as we can for suspected bad behaviour or speech on the part of fellow Muslims. The wealth, property, and life of a Muslim are held sacred; no one has the right to interfere with these without his or her express permission. The enormity of such sins as slander and backbiting is emphasized in many verses of the Quran, and Chapter 104 (The Slanderer) is dedicated to this very subject.

We should restrain our eyes from looking at what they are not entitled to (such as the private parts of others), and we should keep our ears from listening to loose and immoral talk, including lewd song lyrics.

The Quran praises and encourages knowledge and criticizes ignorance, saying that it leads to destruction. It commands people to action and dynamism, while prohibiting wasteful talk and laziness.

12.9 Family structure and rights

Islam teaches that children should be born within a legal marriage and that sexual desire should be controlled and contained within these parameters.

To uphold the family structure and the well-being of society, the Quran prohibits fornication because it is one of the worst assaults on a person's honour and dignity. It is something which causes disease and produces children who are looked upon by society as 'illegitimate'.

Likewise, the Quran forbids everything which leads to fornication, so it prohibits behaviour like looking at pornographic pictures and being alone with members of the opposite sex who are not *mahrams*.[32] It also commands that men lower their gaze and not look or stare at women whom they have no right to look at. Muslim women thus enjoy protection and security and can be confident that Muslim men will not even look at her if they are not permitted to. Likewise, women should not gaze at men unlawfully.

12.10 Decency and veiling

With this same reasoning, Islam enjoins morality in behaviour and appearance. Fashions that reduce women to sex objects are not acceptable. Islamic veiling is a means of protection from unwanted external attention. Allah says in the Quran:

﴾O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused...﴿

(Quran 33: 59)

In the privacy of their own homes and in the presence of their husbands, when they will receive only the type of attention they desire, women may wear whatever they wish.

12.11 The rights of the wife

Islam urges men to be kind to their wives. Allah says in the Quran:

﴾...He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy...﴿ *(Quran 30: 21)*

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32 *mahram*: woman with whom marriage is not permitted, for example, one’s sister or one’s mother. Non-mahram women are those with whom marriage is permitted.

Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) said:

«The best of you are those who are kindest to their wives.» (Recorded by Imam Ibn Majah with a sound chain of narration)

This is because one can be kind in public where everyone is watching, yet be mean and cruel at home. Islam holds Muslims accountable even in this situation, where their true nature may be revealed. This is the true test of moral behaviour.

In Islam, the wife retains her independent legal status and family name. She is not the property of her husband in any way, but she has many rights due from him, as he does from her.

The husband must give his wife a valuable gift at the time of marriage, and this is hers to keep even if she is later divorced. The wife is never obliged to act as a co-provider for the family, although she may voluntarily do so. It is the husband's sole responsibility to support his family financially. Islam gives women (whether married, divorced or single) the right to inherit and own property and to conduct business.

12.12 Polygyny

Polygyny (a man's having more than one wife) is permitted in Islam as a solution to social problems such as the plight of orphans and widows who need support. It is also a way to safeguard honesty and matrimonial trustworthiness (especially within the family) for those who have a desire or need for more than one sexual partner; instead of having an extramarital affair, the man is required to take responsibility for his actions. Islam limits polygyny to a maximum of four wives at one time, and it requires the husband to treat them equally, caring for his wives financially and emotionally in the exact same manner. It should be noted that if a woman is unhappy in this situation, and she fears that she will be unable to fulfil her responsibilities to her

husband as well as to Allah, she can opt out of the marriage. A man is not allowed to force his wife to stay married.

12.13 Divorce rules

Islam is a religion of moderation. Although divorce is allowed when necessary, family unity is encouraged. For example, in the event of a divorce, the two spouses are encouraged to bring arbitrators from their family members to help reconcile them. Islam discourages divorce, yet it recognizes the rights of both partners to end their matrimonial relationship if circumstances dictate it. Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) said:

«A believing man should not hate a believing woman. If he dislikes one of her traits, he will be pleased with another.» (Recorded by Imam Muslim)

Therefore Islam is realistic about the option of divorce, but it also encourages attempts to resolve any conflicts and hold the marriage together.

It is clear that women in Islam are honoured for their roles as mothers. Islam acknowledges that a woman sacrifices her life for her children, so she is given an honour above that of the father.

12.14 Protection of life

The Quran also calls for the protection and sanctity of human life, specifically mentioning that the taking of an innocent life is one of the worst and most hideous crimes. The Prophet (bpuh) forbade breaking the bones of a dead person, so what about the taking of an innocent life? The Quran prescribes 'a life for a life' and 'an eye for an eye' for all killings or injuries, large or small, unless the family of the victim agrees to accept financial compensation instead.

12.15 Protection of property

The Quran declares that a person's property and wealth are safe and inviolable; therefore it prohibits theft, bribery, usury and deception. It calls for moderation in spending; hence it forbids extravagance, lavishness and squandering money, while at the same time forbidding the hoarding and amassing of wealth. It calls for balance; people should neither be greedy, stingy and covetous nor extravagant and wasteful. It encourages people to seek their livelihoods and provisions through lawful activities that bring financial or material benefit to all parties concerned, such as buying, selling and renting. As mentioned previously, Islam also safeguards the rights and needs of the poor, especially those who are members of one's own family or community, so that they are not forced to go elsewhere to seek help.

12.16 Maintaining health

Islam promotes good health and therefore commands that only wholesome and nutritious food be eaten, and eaten in moderation. It prohibits the consumption of all harmful food and drink such as pork, carrion, tobacco, alcohol and other intoxicants (mind-altering substances), and so forth.

﴾He has only forbidden to you **dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine**, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.﴿ *(Quran 2: 173)*

In the past, pork was known to carry the risk of trichinosis, a disease caused by parasitic roundworms usually found in undercooked pork. Today, some consider this risk to be low, since food safety standards are more advanced, but in fact, pork still may be harmful. In its January 2013 issue, *Consumer Reports* published an article

titled, "Pork Chops and Ground Pork Contaminated with Bacteria," which began:

> Our analysis of pork-chop and ground-pork samples from around the U.S. found that yersinia enterocolitica, a bacterium that can cause fever, diarrhea, and abdominal pain, was widespread. Some samples harbored other potentially harmful bacteria, including salmonella...
>
> Some of the bacteria we found in 198 samples proved to be resistant to antibiotics commonly used to treat people. The frequent use of low-dose antibiotics in pork farming may be accelerating the growth of drug-resistant "superbugs" that threaten human health.

The dangers of tobacco are well known. A fact sheet at the World Health Organization website states that tobacco kills six million people a year (including 600,000 from the effects of second-hand smoke, which causes "serious cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, including coronary heart disease and lung cancer"). Up to half of all tobacco users will die from a tobacco-related disease.

﴾O you who have believed, indeed, **intoxicants**, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone altars [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.﴿ *(Quran 5: 90)*

As for alcohol, its dangers are also well documented. The World Health Organization's fact sheet on alcohol explains that, "Worldwide, 3.3 million deaths every year result from harmful use of alcohol, this represent 5.9 % of all deaths." Alcohol is also described as "a causal factor in more than 200 disease and injury conditions," including "a range of mental and behavioural disorders, other noncommunicable conditions as well as injuries" and infectious diseases. Current medical advice often refers to "moderate drinking" as being safe for some people, and news reports even cite some benefits from "moderate" drinking. Allah addressed this argument when He informed us:

﴾They ask you about wine and gambling. Say: In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit...﴿ *(Quran 2: 219)*

Islam also prescribes fasting, which has many benefits for the body, especially the digestive system. Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) warned against overeating, saying:

«No man fills a container worse than his stomach. A few morsels that keep his back upright are sufficient for him. If he has to, then he should keep one-third for food, one-third for drink and one-third for his breathing.» (A sound hadith recorded by Imam at-Tirmidhi)

12.17 Animal rights

The Prophet (bpuh) ordered that animals be treated fairly and with kindness, instructing that they should be fed and given water. He promised that such actions would be rewarded on the Day of Resurrection. He also instructed that they should not be made to carry a burden more than they can bear, tormented or caused undue suffering, or killed (unless they were harmful). If an animal is to be slaughtered as food, it should not be slaughtered in front of other animals since this would cause them anguish.

12.18 Rights of the deceased

Islam maintains respect for a person even after death. When a Muslim dies, he or she must be buried according to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh). The body of the person is washed and perfumed. After that, it is wrapped in an unstitched white cloth shroud, and the body is buried facing the Kaaba (the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Abraham and Ishmael).

We are advised to hold the deceased's body gently to ensure that its bones do not break. Before and after the burial, people are encouraged

to pray that Allah forgive the deceased and admit him or her into paradise. Islam prohibits sitting on or walking over a grave, in another sign of respect for the dead.

13. ISLAM AND OTHER RELIGIONS

One may ask, “If all true religions came with the same message, namely the worship of Allah alone, then why do we find such differences between them?” The answer is that the original forms of these earlier messages were either lost or distorted by later generations. Consequently, the pure messages of monotheism became polluted with myths, superstitions, idolatry and irrational philosophical beliefs; hence, those religions no longer represent the embodiment of Allah’s revelations. However, Allah, the Compassionate, did not leave human beings without guidance. He ultimately sent Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) to revive the original message and to call human beings back to the correct path: believing in the unique Oneness of Allah and worshipping Him according to His teachings as mentioned in the Quran.

Consequently, Islam is the seal and completion of all religions, the Quran is the seal and completion of all revealed books, and Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) is the seal of all prophets—the final prophet.

14. ELEVEN FACTS ABOUT JESUS (PBUH) AND HIS MOTHER (MARY) IN THE ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

The Quran highlights the important aspects of Jesus' birth, along with his miracles, his mission and his ascension. The Quranic account of Jesus' ministry confirms most of his miracles mentioned in the Bible; it even identifies some which are not mentioned in the Bible. What we know about Prophet Jesus Christ (pbuh) can be divided into two topics: his personality and his message. The following are eleven facts that you should know about Jesus (pbuh) in the Islamic teachings.

14.1 The status of Jesus (pbuh) in Islam

Islam teaches that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is one of the most respected prophets because of his efforts in spreading the word of Allah. Muslims display a true spirit of love towards him and his mother, Mary. There is not a single disparaging remark against Prophet Jesus (pbuh) or any other prophet in the entire Quran or in other Islamic literature or Islamic history books. Evidence of praise for Jesus (pbuh) is the fact that his story, along with that of his mother, is mentioned in three places in the Quran: Chapters 3, 4 and 19. In fact, an entire chapter of the Quran (Chapter 19) is named 'Maryam' (Mary) in her honour.[33]

[33] Readers should note that this honour has not been given to Mary in the New Testament, and none of its books is named after Mary or her son Jesus. It is also noteworthy that there is no chapter in the Quran named after any of Prophet Muhammad's wives or daughters.

Another sign of praise is that the name of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is mentioned twenty-five times in the Quran; in contrast, Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) is mentioned by name only four times. This proves that Islam honours all prophets for the message they have in common; it did not disregard earlier prophets with the coming of another.

Jesus (pbuh) has been referred to in the Quran by many titles: Ibn Maryam (son of Mary), the Messiah (the anointed one), Abdullah (slave of Allah), and *Rasool Allah* (Messenger of Allah).

This praise and glorification agrees with what Jesus (pbuh) is reported to have said about the prophet who would succeed him, "He will glorify me." (John 16:14)

14.2 The beginning of Jesus' lineage

The Quranic account of Jesus (pbuh) starts with the story of his grandmother, the wife of Imran. When she conceived Mary, she vowed to dedicate her unborn child to the worship of Allah and service to Jerusalem.

Mary grew up to be very righteous. She dedicated herself to the worship of Allah, the Exalted, and received provisions from Him. Therefore, it is no mystery as to why she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus (pbuh). The Quranic verses inform us:

﴾ [Mention, O Muhammad,] when the wife of 'Imran said: My Lord, indeed I have pledged to You what is in my womb, consecrated [for Your service],[34] so accept this from me. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing. But when she delivered her, she said: My Lord, I have delivered a female—and Allah was most knowing of what she delivered—and the male is not like the female. I have named her Mary, and I seek refuge for her in You and [for] her descendants from Satan, the expelled [from the mercy of Allah]. So her Lord accepted

[34] meaning service to Jerusalem.

her with good acceptance and caused her to grow in a good manner and put her in the care of Zachariah. Every time Zachariah visited her in the prayer chamber, he found with her provision. He said: O Mary, from where is this [coming] to you? She said: It is from Allah. Indeed, Allah provides for whom He wills without account.》

(Quran 3: 35-37)

It is interesting to note that when the mother of Mary delivered her child, she was a bit disappointed to discover that she did not have a son, because she had always wished for her child to be dedicated to the worship of Allah. Little did she know that this very child would be extremely righteous and would end up being the mother of Jesus himself. This was better for her than a son, hence Allah's words: 《…and Allah was most knowing of what she delivered…》.

14.3 The status of Mary

Mary, mother of Jesus, is very highly respected in Islam. Her story is an important one that is mentioned several times in the Quran. Mary is mentioned by name thirty-one times in the Quran, and an entire chapter of the Quran is named after her. This is an honor that not even the women in Prophet Muhammad's family were accorded. Although there are stories and anecdotes in the Quran about other women of strong faith, and others of importance in the history of the three Abrahamic religions, none other than Mary is actually mentioned by name.

Allah has said:

《And [mention] when the angels said: O Mary, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds. O Mary, be devoutly obedient to your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow [in prayer]. That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you [O Muhammad]…》

(Quran 3: 42-44)

14.4 The news about Jesus (pbuh)

When Mary approached adulthood, she was informed well before his birth about the honour of bearing this noble son. It was the angel Gabriel (pbuh) who appeared in front of her with this news. The following verses in the Quran describe the dialogue between Mary and the angel:

﴾ [And mention] when the angels said: O Mary, indeed Allah gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary—distinguished in this world and the hereafter and among those brought near [to Allah]. He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity and will be of the righteous. She said: My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me? [The angel] said: Such is Allah; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it: Be—and it is.﴿ *(Quran 3: 45-47)*

14.5 The birth of Jesus (pbuh)

Mary conceived this child miraculously (the first miracle) and retired to a distant place where she waited for the birth of her child. This amazing story has been related to us in Chapter 19 of the Quran, titled Maryam (Mary):

﴾So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a remote place. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said: Oh, I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten. But he called her from below her: Do not grieve; your Lord has provided beneath you a stream. And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates. So eat and drink and be contented. And if you see from among humanity anyone, say: Indeed, I have vowed to the Most Merciful abstention, so I will not speak today to [any] man.﴿ *(Quran 19: 22-26)*

Allah created Adam from neither a man nor a woman, while he created Eve from the rib of a man (Adam). He has created the rest

of humanity, both male and female, from the union of males and females. From the union of a man and woman, He can create males only, females only, both males and females, or no offspring at all (if one or both of them are infertile). He is the Creator and All-powerful. He can create from elderly men and women, as He did with Prophets Abraham and Zachariah and their wives, who were given Isaac and John the Baptist, respectively. Bearing that in mind, the creation of Jesus through the medium of a woman, but without the intervention of a man, is certainly possible and in accordance with the notion that Allah creates whoever and however He wills; thus it is not difficult to believe and accept.

﴾Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created Him from dust; then He said to him: Be—and he was.﴿ *(Quran 3: 59)*

14.6 Subsequent miracles of Jesus (pbuh)

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was blessed with the ability to perform many miracles. This supported his claim that he was a prophet sent by Allah Almighty, Who has said:

﴾…And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs and supported him with the pure spirit…﴿ *(Quran 2: 87)*

Muslims do not hesitate to accept that Jesus (pbuh) performed miracles. At the same time, Muslims do not elevate Jesus (pbuh) to the position of Allah or describe him as the 'son of God'. They do not consider him to be anything more than a divinely-inspired man: a messenger and prophet of Allah.

The same applies to all the other prophets, since many of them were blessed with different miracles as well.

The first miracle associated with Jesus (pbuh) was that he was born from a mother without any human intervention (father). Allah gave the divine command "Be," and he was created.

The Quran has mentioned the miraculous creation of both Adam and Jesus in the following verse (which was mentioned in the previous section):

﴾Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created Him from dust; then He said to him: Be—and he was.﴿ *(Quran 3: 59)*

The Quran has mentioned that Jesus' miraculous birth did not change his status as a human; in other words, he did not evolve from a human being to become Allah or a son of Allah. If that had been the case, then Adam would have had a greater right to such an honour, since he was born without a human father or mother.

<u>Another miracle</u> was that Allah gave Jesus (pbuh) the ability to speak as a newborn baby, a blessing which helped save his mother from the harsh slander of her own community. This remarkable story has been narrated in the Quran:

﴾Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said: O Mary, you have certainly done a thing unprecedented. O sister of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste. So she pointed to him. They said: How can we speak to one who is in the cradle, a child? [Jesus] said: Indeed, I am the slave of Allah. He has given me the scripture and made me a prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakah as long as I remain alive, and [made me] dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a wretched tyrant. And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive.﴿[35] *(Quran 19: 27-33)*

<u>Other subsequent miracles</u> performed by Jesus (pbuh) have also been mentioned in the Quran:

﴾ [The day] when Allah will say: O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My favour upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the pure spirit and you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity;[36] and [remember] when I taught you writing and

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35 It should be noted that this amazing miracle was not mentioned anywhere in the New Testament.

36 This means that Jesus called people to worship Allah both while he was a baby in the cradle and when he reached adulthood.

wisdom,[37] and the Torah and the Gospel,[38] and when you designed from clay [what was] like the form of a bird with My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird with My permission; and you healed the blind and the leper with My permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My permission; and when I restrained the children of Israel from [killing] you when you came to them with clear proofs and those who disbelieved among them said: This is not but obvious magic.﴿ *(Quran 5: 110)*

Indeed, the Islamic account of the miracles bestowed on Jesus (pbuh) describes more miracles than those known to Christians. Points 14.10 and 14.11 below describe two more miracles associated with Jesus (pbuh) and his role as the Messiah.

An important note

As shown in the previous verse, it was emphasized after mentioning each miracle that whenever Jesus (pbuh) performed a miracle, he informed people that it was by Allah's permission. He made it clear to his followers that he was not performing the miracle by himself. As Dr. Philips points out:

> There are texts in the New Testament which confirm that Jesus did not act on his own. Jesus is quoted in John 5:30 saying: I can of mine own self do nothing... In Acts 2:22, Paul writes: Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs **which God did through him** in your midst, as you yourselves know...[39]

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[37] 'Wisdom' here means the correct and profound understanding of religion.

[38] In this context, 'Gospel' refers to the original form of revelation given to Jesus, not the Gospels that exist in the Bible today. According to Quranic exegesis, Jesus had memorized this revelation as well as the Torah (the scripture revealed to Moses).

[39] Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 45.

14.7 Human qualities of Jesus (pbuh)

Islam forbids the deification of human beings (going to excess in the exaltation of human beings—prophets or otherwise—to the point where they perceive them to be divine). Addressing both the Jews and the Christians, Allah has said in the Quran:

﴾O People of the Scripture,[40] do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah, and His word which He directed to Mary, and a soul [created at a command] from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers. And do not say: Three; desist—it is better for you. Indeed, Allah is but one God. Exalted is He above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs. Never would the Messiah disdain to be a slave of Allah, nor would the angels near [to Him]. And whoever disdains His worship and is arrogant—He will gather them to Himself all together. And as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, He will give them in full their rewards and grant them extra from His bounty. But as for those who disdained and were arrogant, He will punish them with a painful punishment, and they will not find for themselves besides Allah any protector or helper. O humankind, there has come to you a conclusive proof from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light. So those who believe in Allah and hold fast to Him—He will admit them to mercy from Himself and bounty and guide them to Himself on a straight path.﴿ *(Quran 4: 171-175)*

Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) also warned against the deification of humans. He said:

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[40] Allah begins this sacred verse with a word of respect; the Jews and the Christians are addressed as learned people who have received revelation in the form of scripture.

«O people, beware of going to excesses in religion, for verily people before you were destroyed for going to excesses in religion.» (Recorded by Imams Ibn Majah and an-Nasai with a sound chain of narration)

Being a human prophet, Jesus (pbuh) did not ask people to worship him, and there is no evidence in the Bible that he did so. Allah has informed us in the Quran that on the Day of Judgement, He will gather all the nations in front of Himself and will ask the messengers how they were received by their peoples and what they said to them. Among those who are going to be questioned is Jesus (pbuh):

﴾And [beware the day] when Allah will say: O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to the people: Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah? He will say: Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen. I said not to them except what You commanded me—to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness. If You should punish them—indeed they are Your slaves; but if You forgive them—indeed it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. Allah will say: This is the day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness. For them are gardens [in paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great attainment.﴿ *(Quran 5: 116-119)*

14.8 Jesus' prophethood

The Islamic view of Jesus (pbuh) is a moderate one, as it lies between the two extremes. The Jews rejected Jesus (pbuh) in his role as a

prophet of Allah and called him an impostor. The Christians, on the other hand, considered him to be the son of God (Allah) and 'God-incarnate' in some cases; thus, they began worshipping him. Islam considers Jesus (pbuh) to be one of the greatest prophets of Allah, Who has said:

﴾The Messiah, son of Mary, was not but a messenger; [other] messengers have passed on before him. And his mother was a supporter of truth.[41] They both used to eat food. Look how We make clear to them the signs; then look how they are deluded.﴿

(Quran 5: 75)

14.9 The mission of Jesus (pbuh)

Now one might ask: what was the real mission of Jesus (pbuh) according to the Quran?

The answer is that Jesus (pbuh) propagated the message of monotheism: worship of Allah alone, as prescribed in the Gospels. He worked hard to propagate this message, inviting all of the people of Israel to it. On the Day of Judgement, when Allah asks Jesus whether he instructed the Christians to worship him and his mother, Jesus will reply:

﴾I said not to them except what You commanded me—to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord...﴿ *(Quran 5: 117)*

Refer for details to Section 17.3: Revival of the doctrine of monotheism.

The prophecy of Muhammad (bpuh) as a successor to Christ was a part of Jesus' message. Allah has mentioned:

﴾And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said: O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what

[41] Mary was a pious, virtuous woman who never claimed that she was the mother of God or that her son was God.

came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad. But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said: This is obvious magic.﴾ *(Quran 61: 6)*

Though the Bible has been altered a great deal over time, it contains remnants of the original true message revealed to Prophet Jesus (pbuh). In this regard, the messenger of whom Jesus gave glad tidings and prophecies is still referred to in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

Jesus was a link in a long line of prophets and messengers whom Allah sent to various civilizations and nations whenever they needed guidance or deviated from His teachings. Jesus was sent by Allah especially to preach to the Jews, who had deviated from the teachings of Moses and other messengers. Just as he was supported by Allah miraculously in his conception, birth and childhood, he was also supported by numerous miracles to prove that he was a messenger from Allah. However, a majority of Jews rejected his ministry.

It must be noted that Jesus Christ (pbuh), son of Mary, was the last in the line of prophets sent to the Jewish people exclusively.

14.10 Jesus′ ascension

Jesus' ascension is the last miracle that was given to him while he was on the earth. The Jews and Romans attempted to kill him, but Allah replaced him with another man who resembled him, and it was this man who was killed. Jesus (pbuh) was neither killed nor crucified; rather, he was raised to Allah. To this day, the Christians believe that Jesus himself was the one who was killed. Allah has said:

﴾And [for] their saying: Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah. And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it.

They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.﴿

(Quran 4: 157-158)

14.11 The second coming of Jesus (pbuh)

In the Islamic teachings, there is clear evidence indicating the second coming of Jesus (pbuh) before the final hour; this will be his final miracle. He will return not as God, as the Christians believe, but as Jesus, Allah's messenger and slave, as he has always been. One of the purposes of his coming will be to correct the misconceptions surrounding his message and mission. According to a statement of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), he will stay for forty years, and these will be the happiest years of life on this earth. During that time, those who had misconceptions about him will correct their understanding and believe in him as a messenger, not as the son of God (Allah).

It was narrated by Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him)[42] that the Messenger of Allah (bpuh) said:

«By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, it will not be long before the son of Mary descends amongst you, a just judge and ruler. He will break the cross, kill the swine and abolish the *jizyah*.[43] Money will be

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[42] Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of the closest Companions of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh). It should be noted that the words, actions and tacit approvals of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) have been narrated by the Companions and have subsequently been recorded. A Companion, according to the majority of scholars, is one who met personally with Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) during his lifetime and was a Muslim at the time of meeting him. Thus, one will find much of the history of the Prophet (bpuh) through such narrations, called hadiths.

[43] *jizyah*: a tax paid by Christians and Jews living under Muslim protection. (The Muslims do not pay jizyah, but they must give a percentage of personal wealth as obligatory charity to designated categories of recipients, such as the poor and the needy.)

so plentiful that no one will accept it. At that time, a single prostration will be better than this world and everything in it.[44]

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) then said: Read if you wish (the following verse of the Quran):

﴾And there is none from the People of the Scripture[45] but that he will surely believe in Jesus before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection, he will be against them a witness.﴿ *(Quran 4: 159)*» (Recorded by Imam Bukhari)

In another narration, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that:

«Among the things which Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) was recorded to have said regarding Prophet Jesus' return is the following:

There will be no prophet between Jesus and me, and Jesus will return. When he does, you will know him. He will be a well-built man of ruddy complexion, and he will descend wearing a two-piece garment. His hair will look wet, though no water will have touched it. He will fight people to establish Islam and he will break the cross, kill the swine and cancel the jizyah. During his time, Allah will destroy all religions except Islam, and the Antichrist will be killed.[46] Jesus will remain on Earth for forty years, and when he dies, Muslims will pray the funeral prayer for him.» (A sound hadith recorded by Imam Abu Dawood)

Jesus' return will be one of the signs of the Day of Judgement. It will be the final miracle given to him before he dies.

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[44] This is because with the coming of Jesus, people will know with certainty that the final hour is very near.

[45] People of the Scripture: Jews and Christians.

[46] The Antichrist is also called the 'false Christ'; he is a man who will claim that he is Allah, and he will be followed by ignorant people, but Prophet Jesus will find him and kill him.

15. THE AMAZING PROPHECIES OF MUHAMMAD (BPUH) IN THE BIBLE: TWENTY-EIGHT PROOFS FROM THE BIBLE OF MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETHOOD[47]

The Biblical prophecies about the coming of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) prove the truth of Islam for people who believe in the Bible. Before addressing these prophecies, readers should consider the following points:

Islamic teachings give a criterion according to which portions or passages from the Bible can be either accepted or rejected. This criterion has been described in the following verse of the Quran:

﴾And We have revealed to you [O Muhammad] the book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the scripture and as a criterion over it...﴿ *(Quran 5: 48)*

This verse emphasizes two main aspects of the Quran:

a. The Quran confirms only those teachings or passages of the previous scriptures which have remained intact.

b. The Quran is the final, complete, authoritative and authentic revelation from Allah. It is the final arbiter and the only criterion to correct any inaccuracy or misinterpretation which might have occurred in the transmission of scriptures throughout the ages. It helps to discover, expose, and disclose human additions or interpolations of previous revelations. Indeed, one of the names

[47] This chapter was compiled from *Muhammad in the Bible* by Dr. Jamal Badawi and *What the Bible says about Muhammad* by Ahmed Deedat.

of the Quran is *al-Furqan* (the criterion which distinguishes between right and wrong, truth and falsehood).

It follows, therefore, that Muslims have no reason to reject the essence of any passage in the Bible if such a passage is confirmed by the Quran. For example, we read in the New Testament a reiteration of one of the Ten Commandments:

Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. (Mark 12:29)

Muslims who read this passage in the Quran can find no objection to its essence. After all, the Quran confirms:

﴾Say: He is Allah, [Who is] One.﴿ *(Quran 112: 1)*

If, however, Muslims read in the Bible (or in other previous scriptures, for that matter) accusations of major moral sins levied against great prophets, or doctrines which are totally negated in the Quran, they can accept only the Quranic version as the original unadulterated truth, revealed by Allah.

Likewise, if the Bible (or other scriptures) contain apparent prophecies about the coming of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), and if the Quran confirms that fact, then there is nothing unusual or objectionable in referring to such prophecies.

Describing true believers, the Quran has stated:

﴾Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet,[48] whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who

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[48] Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) was illiterate; he could neither read nor write. No human had ever taught him a word. The wisdom behind his unlettered status is to repel false accusations that the Quran was written or authored by Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) himself. It shall be noted that there were no Arabic-language Bibles in existence in the 7th century of the Common Era, when Muhammad (bpuh) lived and preached. Indeed, Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) was educated through the Quran, which was revealed to him by His Creator and which contained things that no other human being could have known. Additionally, the Messenger of Allah (bpuh) was the best of humanity in every aspect of his character, including his intellectual skills.

enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong, and makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the evil, and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them. So they who have believed in him, honoured him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him—it is those who will be the successful.﴿ *(Quran 7: 157)*

The original Bible given to Prophets Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them) contained a complete and clear profile of the coming of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh). Even in its present form(s), the Bible still contains several such prophecies, as will be shown in the forthcoming chapters. Quoting Prophet Jesus (pbuh), the Quran has stated:

﴾And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said: O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad. But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said: This is obvious magic.﴿ *(Quran 61: 6)*

The main attributes of Prophet Muhammad's profile in the Bible

The main elements in Prophet Muhammad's profile, as depicted in the Bible, are the following seven:

1. His name
2. His characteristics
3. The location from which he was to emerge
4. The message to be revealed through him
5. Fulfilment of prophecies which he foretold
6. The time when he was to appear
7. The unique proof
8. The consistency between Muhammad's and Jesus' teachings

15.1 His name

Proof 1: Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) is mentioned by name in ten locations in the Gospel of Barnabas.

Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) is mentioned by name in ten locations in the Gospel of Barnabas, in Chapters 39, 41, 44, 54, 55, 97, 112, 136, 165, and 220.[49]

Consider the following explicit quote from Chapter 165:

> The disciples answered: O Master, who shall that man be of whom you speak, who shall come into the world? Jesus answered with joy of heart: He is Muhammad; Messenger of God, and when he comes into the world, even as the rain makes the earth to bear fruit when for a long time it has not rained, even so shall he be occasion of good works among men, through the abundant mercy which he shall bring. For he is a white cloud full of the mercy of God, which mercy God shall sprinkle upon the faithful like rain.

It is a fact that the Trinitarian church has done its utmost to obliterate **all** existing copies of the Gospel of Barnabas and to either hide it from the masses or to label it a forgery.

15.2 His characteristics

Moses (pbuh) reported that God told him:

> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers.[50] And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen

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[49] The Gospel of Barnabas is not included in either the Protestant or Catholic Bible. (Editor)

[50] When these words were spoken, they were addressed to the Israelites. The most notable 'brothers' of Israelites (descendants of Abraham through his second son Isaac) are the Ishmaelites (descendants of Abraham through his first son Ishmael).

> to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. (Deuteronomy 18:18-19)

So the coming prophet will have three characteristics, which are discussed in further detail below:

— He will be like Moses (pbuh).

— He will descend from the Ishmaelites, the brothers of the Israelites.

— He will say what God instructs him to say (for God will put ‘words in his mouth’).

Proof 2: Is like Moses (pbuh).

As explained in ***A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding*** Islam:

> There were hardly any two prophets who were as similar as Prophets Moses and Muhammad (bpuh). Both were given a comprehensive law and code of life. Both encountered their enemies and were victorious in miraculous ways. Both were accepted as prophets and statesmen. Both migrated following conspiracies to assassinate them. Analogies between Moses and Muhammad overlook not only the above similarities, but other crucial ones as well. These include the natural birth, the family life, and the death of Moses and Muhammad (bpuh) but not that of Jesus. Moreover, Jesus was regarded by his followers as the Son of God and not exclusively as a prophet of God, as Moses and Muhammad (bpuh) were and as Muslims believe Jesus was. So, this prophecy refers to Muhammad (bpuh) and not to Jesus, because Muhammad (bpuh) is more like Moses than Jesus [is].[51]

Some people believe that this prophecy refers to Prophet Jesus (pbuh), but this cannot be true. The following eight points of

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[51] Ibrahim, *A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam*, 34.

comparison among Prophets Moses (pbuh), Muhammad (bpuh) and Jesus (pbuh) demonstrate that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) does not fit this particular prophecy. This comparison is self-evident; it clarifies the identity of the prophet who was to come after Moses (pbuh).

Birth

The birth of Jesus (pbuh) was miraculous. According to Christian and Muslim beliefs, he was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary.[52] However, both Moses (pbuh) and Muhammad (bpuh) were born in the usual manner, as a result of the physical association of man and woman. Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses; however, Muhammad (bpuh) is like Moses.

Parents

Moses had a father and a mother; so did Muhammad (bpuh). Jesus, however, had only a mother and no human father. Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (bpuh) is.

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[52] In the Gospel of Matthew 1:18:

> When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph [the carpenter], before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Luke tells us that when the good news of the birth of a holy son was announced to her:

> Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"
>
> And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;" (Luke 1:34-35)

The noble Quran confirms the miraculous birth of Jesus in noble and sublime terms. See Chapter 14 of this book: Eleven Facts about Jesus (pbuh) and His Mother (Mary) in the Islamic Teachings.

It should be noted that it is not necessary for Allah to plant a seed in any human or animal. He merely wills it and it comes into being. This is the correct view of the conception and birth of Jesus.

Marital status

Both Moses (pbuh) and Muhammad (bpuh) got married and had children. There is no record of a marriage and offspring in the case of Jesus (pbuh). Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (bpuh) is.

Death

Both Moses (pbuh) and Muhammad (bpuh) died due to natural causes and were buried. The end of the mission of Jesus (pbuh) on the earth was unusual; being raised up to the heavens, according to Islamic belief, and being crucified, according to Christian belief.[53] According to Christians, Jesus died for the sins of the world, but Moses did not have to die for the sins of the world. He and Muhammad (bpuh) died due to natural causes. Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (bpuh) is.

Prophethood

Jesus was regarded by later Christians as the Son of God and not as a prophet of God (Allah), as Moses and Muhammad (bpuh) were. Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (bpuh) is.

Acceptance/rejection of prophethood

Moses and Muhammad (bpuh) initially met with resistance and scepticism, but they both were eventually accepted by their own people, during their lifetimes, as prophets and leaders. This was not the case with Jesus.

When Moses learned of a plot to kill him, he left Egypt and went to Madyan, where he was welcomed and reassured by Jethro. After returning to Egypt later, Moses led the Jews out of Egypt to escape

[53] This subject will be discussed in Chapter 16: The Facts about Original Sin.

Pharaoh and his soldiers. There is no doubt that the Jews caused endless trouble for Moses as they wandered in the wilderness—one significant lapse was their worship of the golden calf—but ultimately, the Jews, as a nation, acknowledged Moses as a Messenger of Allah who was sent to them.

The Arabs made Muhammad's life terribly difficult during the first ten years of his mission, and he suffered very badly at their hands, After 13 years of preaching in Makkah, he left his home town of Makkah upon learning of a plot to kill him. He went to Yathrib, later called Madinah, and before his death, the Arab nation in general acknowledged him as a Messenger of Allah (bpuh).

In contrast, the Christian Gospels clearly confirm that with the exception of a few followers, Jesus (pbuh) was rejected by his people (the Israelites) throughout his lifetime. According to the Bible, "He [Jesus] came to his own, and his own people did not receive him." (John 1:11) Even today, after two thousand years, his own people—the Jews—on the whole still reject him. Thus, from this aspect, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (bpuh) is.

Confrontation of the enemy

Moses encountered his enemies (the Pharaoh's army), who sought to destroy him and his followers before they could escape to the Red Sea. Muhammad (bpuh) also encountered his enemies (the pagan Arabs), who sought to destroy him and his followers in several battles. No such encounter was reported in the case of Jesus. On the contrary, Jesus was reported to have commanded his disciple Simon Peter to put his sword back into its sheath when he attempted to defend Jesus at the time of his arrest. From this aspect as well, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (bpuh) is.

	MOSES	MUHAMMAD	JESUS
Birth	normal	normal	miraculous
Parents	mother and father	mother and father	mother, with no human father
Marital status	married with children	married with children	unmarried, no children
Death	normal, buried	normal, buried	ascended to heaven, will return to Earth
Prophethood (in the eyes of followers)	seen as a prophet	seen as a prophet	seen as the son of God
Accepted by those he was sent to?	yes	yes	mostly no
Confronted enemies?	yes	yes	no
Moral and military victories?	yes	yes	no

Table 1: Comparison of characteristics among Prophets Moses, Muhammad and Jesus (peace be upon them all).

Moral and Military victories

Moses' encounter with his enemies ended with a military and moral victory. His enemies drowned, and Moses and his followers were saved.

Muhammad's encounters with his enemies also ended with his final military and moral victory over them. He and his followers re-entered the city of Makkah, the centre of plotting against him. Impressed with his truthfulness and magnanimity, the great majority of his former enemies chose to become Muslims and his ardent supporters. Jesus' victory against his enemies was only a moral victory, which did not involve an immediate military victory over them. Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (bpuh) is.

Given these eight points of comparison among Moses (pbuh), Jesus (pbuh) and Muhammad (bpuh), the rational conclusion is that Muhammad (bpuh) is the prophet referred to in Deuteronomy 18:18, "like you (Moses)."

Proof 3: Descends from the Ishmaelites, the brothers of the Israelites

The two prophets, Muhammad (bpuh) and Moses (pbuh), were both descended from the brothers of the Israelites. To elaborate, Abraham (pbuh) had two wives: Sarah and Hagar. Hagar bore Abraham his first son, Ishmael (pbuh),[54] and then Sarah bore him Isaac (pbuh).[55] Ishmael became the grandfather of the Arab nation, and Isaac became the grandfather of the Jewish nation. The prophet who was foretold was to come not from the Jews (the Israelites) but from their brethren, the

[54] See Genesis 16:15.
[55] See Genesis 21:2-3.

Ishmaelites.[56] Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) is a descendant of Ishmael; hence he is that prophet.

Isaiah 42 refers to the 'servant' of God (42:1), His 'chosen' (42:1), and His 'messenger' (42:19). "He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law." (Isaiah 42:4) Jesus did not bring a new law, but Muhammad (bpuh) did.

Isaiah 42:11 mentions that the 'chosen' one was from the descendants of Kedar. Who was Kedar?

> These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael; and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam. (Genesis 25:13)

So Kedar was the second son of Ishmael, and Islamic teachings tell us that they both were ancestors of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh).[57]

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[56] According to the *Hebrew Dictionary of the Bible*, 'brethren' is the "personification of a group of tribes who were regarded as near kinsmen of the Israelites." The Bible refers to the Israelites as the brethren of the Ishmaelites (for instance, see Genesis 16:11-12, KJV, and Genesis 25:17-18, KJV).

[57] Isaiah 42:1-8 reads:

> Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law. Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

Isaiah 42 prophesies the ‘chosen’ one (Isaiah 42:1), whose mission of prophethood would be for all the nations; this fits only Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) whose mission was for all nations, unlike the Hebrew prophets, whose missions were limited to Israel:

> ...he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law. (Isaiah 42:3-4)
>
> Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; (Isaiah 42:11)

Proof 4: Says what God instructs him to say

Allah, the Almighty, put His words into the mouth of Muhammad (bpuh) by sending the angel Gabriel (pbuh) to convey the exact words he should repeat to the people. The words are not his own, since they did not come from his own thoughts. To clarify, when teaching a language, if the teacher asks a student to read or repeat after him, is he not putting these foreign words into the student’s mouth?

The words of the noble Quran were revealed in an identical manner.

History tells us that Muhammad (bpuh) was forty years of age at that time. One night during the month of Ramadan, he was in a cave some three miles north of the city of Makkah. In the cave, the archangel Gabriel (pbuh) commanded him in his mother tongue: *iqra* (which may be translated as: read, proclaim, or recite)!

Muhammad (bpuh) was terrified; in his bewilderment, he replied that he was unlettered. The angel commanded him a second time, with the same result. For the third time, the angel uttered the same command. This time, Muhammad (bpuh) grasped that what was required from him was to repeat and to recite, so he repeated the words as they were put into his mouth:

﴾Recite in the name of your Lord Who created—created humankind from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous—Who taught by the pen—taught humankind that which it knew not.﴿ *(Quran 96: 1-5)*

As soon as the awe-inspiring angel departed, Muhammad (bpuh) rushed back home, shaking in fear and sweating all over. He asked his beloved wife, Khadeejah (may Allah be pleased with her), to cover him up. He lay down, and she remained by him, calming him down and comforting him. When he had regained his composure, he explained to her what he had seen and heard. She assured him that Allah, the Exalted, would not allow anything terrible to happen to him. During the next twenty-three years of his life, after being given the prophethood, words were 'put into his mouth' in the same way, and he uttered them. These words (verses) made an indelible impression on his heart and mind, and as the volumes of the sacred scripture (the noble Quran) grew, they were recorded on palm leaves, on animal skins, and on the shoulder-blades of dead animals—as well as in the hearts of his devoted disciples.

The words (revelation) were actually put into his mouth exactly as foretold in the prophecy under discussion, "I will put my words in his mouth." (Deut. 18:18) In a similar quote, Jesus (pbuh) says of the 'Paraclete' who come after him:

> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak. (John 16:13)

As a scholar of comparative religion has said:

> Neither the content of the revelation, nor its form, were of Muhammad's devising. Both were given by the angel, and Muhammad's task was only to repeat what he heard.[58]

[58] Parrinder, *World Religions*, 472.

Proof 5: Unlettered prophet

Muhammad's experience in the cave of Hira (later known as Jabal an-Noor, the Mountain of Light), and his response to that first revelation is the exact fulfilment of another Biblical prophecy. In Isaiah 29:12, we read, "And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, 'Read this,' he says, 'I cannot read.'"

It is a well-known fact that Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) could not read or write.[59] He was described in the Quran as the unlettered prophet.[60] Allah has also said:

﴾Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed, taught to him by one intense in strength.﴿ *(Quran 53: 3-5)*

Proof 6: A new song

Another indication (other than the prophecy in Deuteronomy) is that Isaiah ties the messenger connected with Kedar to 'a new song' (meaning a scripture in a new language) to be sung to the Lord. (Isaiah 42:10-11)

More explicitly, the Book of Isaiah mentions, "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people." (Isaiah 28:11, KJV) This latter verse correctly describes the 'stammering lips' of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) reflecting the state of tension and concentration, as well as of unfamiliarity, that he experienced at the time of revelation.

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59 The wisdom behind this has been discussed in an earlier footnote.

60 ﴾Those who follow the Messenger, **the unlettered prophet**, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel... So believe in Allah and His Messenger, **the unlettered prophet**, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him that you may be guided.﴿ *(Quran 7: 157-158)*

Proof 7: Revealed in sections

A related fact is that the Quran was revealed in sections over a span of twenty-three years. It is interesting to compare this with Isaiah 28, which speaks of the same thing:

> For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little. (Isaiah 28:10)

Proof 8: Name of God

Deuteronomy 18:19 reads, "And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him." This prophecy in Deuteronomy mentions that this prophet will speak the words of God, starting with the **name of God**. If we look at the Quran, we will find that every chapter except Chapter 9 is preceded by, or begins with, the phrase "In the name of God (Allah), Most Gracious, Most Merciful."

The very first passage of the Quran that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) reads:

﴾Recite in the name of your Lord Who created.﴿ *(Quran 96: 1)*

Furthermore, Islam also teaches people to start almost every action in their daily life with the words, "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful," which is in accordance with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh).

As mentioned earlier, the name 'Allah' is how He refers to Himself in the Quran, and how Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) always referred to him. To say, "In the name of Allah" is a far clearer fulfilment of the prophecy "he shall speak in my name" than are other common expressions such as "In the name of God" or "In the name of the Father."[61]

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[61] Referring to Allah (God) as 'the Father' is an example of the serious distortions in the Bible. Allah has said about Himself:

﴾He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.﴿ *(Quran 112: 3-4)*

Other Biblical characteristics of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh)

An equally interesting and most revealing profile of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) can be found in the 42nd chapter of the Book of Isaiah. Let us examine some of these characteristics:

Proof 9: The "one in whom God's soul delights" is called the 'servant' of God (42:1, 19), His 'messenger' (42:19) and His 'chosen' (42:1)

Translated into Arabic, these titles read: *Abduhu*, *rasooluhu*, and *al-mustafa*. All the prophets were indeed slaves and elects of Allah, yet no prophet in history has been universally called by these specific titles, as Muhammad (bpuh) has been. The testimony of faith by which a person enters into the fold of Islam reads, "I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship other than Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger."

Virtually the same formula is repeated five times a day during the call to prayers, five times a day immediately before the beginning of prayers, nine times a day during the minimum mandatory prayers, and several more times if the Muslim performs additional recommended prayers. The most common title used for Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), from the beginning of his mission until today, is *Rasool Allah* (the Messenger of Allah [bpuh]). The Quran has given him this title, and during his lifetime, he was addressed as such by his followers. The voluminous collections of hadiths have been narrated typically in these forms: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (bpuh) say..." or "The Messenger of Allah (bpuh) said..." He has been described in the Quran as "Allah's slave" and "Allah's Messenger."

Proof 10: He will not grow faint or be discouraged until "he has established justice in the earth" (42:4); "he shows himself mighty against his foes," (42:13) and he "bring[s] forth justice to the nations" (42:1)

While comparing the lives and missions of Jesus (pbuh) and Muhammad (bpuh), it is clear that this verse talks about Prophet Muhammad (bpuh). On more than one occasion, Jesus expressed how disappointed he was with the Israelites' rejection of him. Also, Jesus was not present long enough to prevail over his enemies (beyond the moral victory, which is common to all prophets).

On the other hand, we find no trace of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) being discouraged, even in the most critical moments of his mission. In the space of one year, his beloved and supportive wife, Khadeejah (May Allah be pleased with her) died after twenty-five years of successful marriage; his uncle Abu Talib, who was instrumental in protecting him from the fury of the pagan Arabs (in Makkah) also died. These two tragedies were combined with the fact that his followers constituted only a small persecuted and tortured group. Under such trying circumstances, Muhammad (bpuh) went to the city of Taif to invite people to Islam and to seek their support in his struggle against paganism. He was rejected, mocked and stoned until his knees and feet bled. In spite of all this, he was never "discouraged" (to use the term from Isaiah 42:4).

When the angel of mountains offered him the chance to retaliate by destroying their city, he refused in the hope that some of descendants of these wicked people would worship Allah, and indeed, some of them did!

After this bitter struggle, Muhammad (bpuh) "prevailed against his enemies," establishing a strong community of believers who indeed brought "justice to the nations,"[62] especially in the Persian

[62] See Isaiah 42:1.

and Byzantine Empires. Many members of those nations were guided to Islam, while others suffered defeats. As such, he was truly “a light for the nations” and for the whole world as well.[63]

Proof 11: “He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street;” (42:2)

From the life history of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), it is known that he was described by these characteristics. Also, the Quran teaches these characteristics, saying:

﴾And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys.﴿ *(Quran 31: 19)*

Proof 12: “The coastlands wait for his law” (42:4)

The only prophet who came after this prophecy (made in Isaiah’s time) with a complete and comprehensive code of law was Prophet Muhammad (bpuh). The law that was revealed to him spread to all corners of the earth, even to the remote islands and the farthest deserts.

Proof 13: “My [God’s] glory I give to no other” (42:8)

The greatest glory a person receives from God (Allah) is to be entrusted as His messenger to humankind and receive His glorious revelation. Not only did this apply to Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), but it applied to him uniquely as the last and final messenger and prophet of Allah. Truly, Allah’s glory (revelation of scriptures) was not given, and will not be given, to any other prophet after Muhammad (bpuh); he is the ‘seal’ of all prophets. After a letter or a message has been written, folded and sealed, nothing further can be added to it. It has been more than 1400 years since Muhammad (bpuh) was sent and the Quran was revealed to him. Yet we hear of no genuine prophet having the magnitude and influence on humanity to be compared

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63 See Isaiah 49:6.

with such figures as Abraham (pbuh), Moses (pbuh), Jesus (pbuh) and Muhammad (bpuh); nor do we hear about another post-Quranic glory or holy book that has influenced humankind to such a degree.

Proof 14: A descendant of Ishmael (pbuh)

The person to come was connected with the Arabs, specifically with the descendants of Ishmael (pbuh) who settled in Makkah and its environs. Isaiah 42:11 leaves absolutely no doubt about the identity of that prophet.

> Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; let the habitants of Sela [the rock] sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains.

According to the Book of Genesis (25:13), Kedar was the second son of Ishmael. The best of the prophets from Ishmael's descendants is Muhammad (bpuh). His enemies (of his own clan), who were misled by their leaders or "mighty men" (as described in Isaiah 21:17), ultimately embraced Islam and were embraced by it. Indeed, they had reason to "lift up their voice," to "sing" praise of God, and to "shout from the top of the mountains." Consider now this daily call to prayer, heard around the world from every mosque: *Allahu Akbar!* (Allah is the Greatest!)

This "shouting" is chanted annually, by multitudes of Muslims from all over the world, from Mount Arafah and other places as part of the annual rites of Hajj (pilgrimage):

> Here I am [at Your command] O Allah. Here I am. Here I am. There is no partner with you [in our worship]. Here I am at Your command. Verily, yours is the praise, the blessings and sovereignty. There is no partner besides you [in our worship].

Proof 15: He will be sent "to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness." (42:7)

Many of those who were opposed to the truth, and who fought Muhammad (bpuh) bitterly, nevertheless ended up as the most devout believers, with their blindness to the truth cured. Those who lived in the darkness of an unholy life came to the light of truth completed through the mission of Muhammad (bpuh).

No wonder the Quran describes itself as light manifest. Describing the Quran, Allah has addressed Prophet Muhammad (bpuh):

﴾...[This is] a book which We have revealed to you [O Muhammad], that you might bring humankind out of darknesses into the light by permission of their Lord—to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy.﴿ *(Quran 14: 1)*

Proof 16: "Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth…" (42:10)

A new song may be a reference to a new scripture in a language other than the language of the Israelite scriptures. This interpretation seems consistent with a more explicit mention of someone who will be speaking to people (including the Israelites) in "a foreign tongue." (Isaiah 28:11)

This explanation seems to fit closely with the verse that speaks of the praise of God "from the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 24:16) Only in the case of Islam do we find this prophecy realized in amazing accuracy. In all corners of the earth, five times every day, the praise of Allah and His last messenger, Muhammad (bpuh), is chanted from the minarets of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of mosques around the world. Additionally, millions of devout Muslims praise Allah and Muhammad (bpuh) frequently on a daily basis. Praising

Abraham and his descendants, along with Muhammad (bpuh) and his descendants, is even a part of the five daily obligatory prayers.

The 42nd chapter of Isaiah is indeed a fascinating one. It is not a casual or ambiguous reference to the Messenger of Allah (bpuh), who was to come centuries later. It is rather a comprehensive profile fitting only one person: Prophet Muhammad (bpuh). After all, the chapter relates this profile to Kedar, son of Ishmael, and no other descendant of Ishmael fits this description except Muhammad (bpuh).

Proof 17: Riding the camel

Prophet Isaiah (pbuh) prophesied the coming of two leaders, whom he metaphorically called 'chariots', one riding a donkey and another riding a camel. "And he saw a chariot with **a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of** camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed." (Isaiah 21:7, KJV)

Who are the 'couple of horsemen'?

They are Jesus (pbuh) and Muhammad (bpuh). Let us examine the proof:

Jesus fulfilled the riding of the donkey prophecy, which says, "And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written." (John 12:14)

The quote "just as it is written" is referring to Isaiah 21:7. It is important to know that nowhere in the New Testament do we see Jesus (pbuh) riding any camel. Nowhere in the New Testament do we see any fulfilment of any kind about the prophecy of riding the camel.

When we look at Muhammad (bpuh), he rode camels many times during his lifetime. Perhaps the most well-known incident is when he migrated from Makkah to Madinah to escape the torture of the pagans. When Muhammad (bpuh) rode into Madinah on his camel, the Muslims in Madinah were arguing about where to build the first

Islamic mosque and the Prophet's humble home, which would be next to it. The members of each group/tribe wanted them to be in their own neighbourhood. In order to avoid hurting anyone's feelings, the Prophet (bpuh) released the reins of his camel so that it could walk freely, and then he let it settle at the location chosen by Allah. This wisdom from Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) solved the problem.

Now, the open questions to any Jewish rabbi, or Christian priest or minister, are as follows:

- Where in the Bible do we see the fulfilment of the prophecy about riding the camel?
- In the Bible, who was the prophet who rode the camel, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 21:7? The New Testament fulfils the riding of the donkey prophecy (of John 12:14), and it claims that it fulfilled only that prophecy. There is still an unfulfilled prophecy in the New Testament regarding riding the camel.
- If Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) was not the one who fulfilled the remainder of the prophecy in Isaiah 21:7, then who was that prophet?

These prophecies in the Old and New Testaments predict, in unequivocal terms, the coming of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) and the genuineness of his prophethood.

15.3 The location from which he was to emerge

Proof 18: Deuteronomy 33:1-2

Deuteronomy 33:1-2 combines references to Moses (pbuh), Jesus (pbuh) and Muhammad (bpuh). It speaks about God's revelation coming from Sinai, rising from Seir (probably the village of Sair near Jerusalem) and shining forth from Paran. According to Genesis

21:21, the wilderness of Paran was the place where Ishmael (pbuh) settled. In other words, it was in Arabia, and specifically in Makkah.

Another sign of the prophet to come from Paran (Makkah) was that he would come with “ten thousands of holy ones.” (Deuteronomy 33:2) That was the same number of faithful who accompanied Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) to Makkah in his victorious, bloodless return to his birthplace to destroy the remaining symbols of idolatry in the Kaaba. The text says, “he shone forth from Mount Paran; he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire[64] at his right hand.”

According to Islamic history, the city of Makkah (Paran) was liberated by Prophet Muhammad’s 10,000 troops.

If Muhammad (bpuh), who liberated the city of Paran with 10,000 believing men (“holy ones”), was not the one who fulfilled this Biblical prophecy and ended the worship of the 365 gods (in the form of idols), then who was that prophet? Is there another prophet who marched upon Makkah with this exact same number of men? The historical answer is: Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) is the only prophet whom this prophecy fits perfectly.

Proof 19: Habakkuk 3:3

Habakkuk 3:3 speaks of God (God’s help) coming from Teman (an oasis north of Madinah, according to Hastings’ *Dictionary of the Bible*),[65] and the “Holy One” coming from Paran. That “Holy One” who, under persecution, migrated from Paran (Makkah) to be received enthusiastically in Madinah was none other than Prophet **Muhammad** (bpuh).

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[64] The meaning of the Hebrew word used here is uncertain.

[65] Hastings, James, entry for ‘Tema’, *Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible*, accessed May 4, 2015, http://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/hdb/view.cgi?n=5416.

Indeed, the incident of the migration of the Prophet (bpuh) and his persecuted followers is vividly and prophetically described in **Isaiah 21:13-17**. That section foretold the battle of Badr as well, in which the few ill-armed faithful miraculously defeated the "mighty men" of Kedar, who sought to destroy Islam and intimidate their own folks who had turned to Islam. The text reads:

> The oracle concerning Arabia. In the thickets in Arabia you will lodge, O caravans of Dedanites. To the thirsty bring water; meet the fugitive with bread, O inhabitants of the land of Tema. For they have fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, from the bent bow, and from the press of battle. For thus the Lord said to me, "Within a year, according to the years of a hired worker, all the glory of Kedar will come to an end. And the remainder of the archers of the mighty men of the sons of Kedar will be few, for the LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken." (Isaiah 21:13-17)

15.4 The message to be revealed through him

The Bible foretells the story of revelation.

Proof 20: Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) was illiterate.

During his entire life, he never learned to read or write. The exact circumstances of the first revelation have been mentioned: it was the habit of Muhammad (bpuh) to frequently get away from the midst of his fellow Arabs and their heathen ways and spend many days secluded in the cave of Hira in the mountains of Makkah. There, he would pray to Allah, the Exalted, according to the practice of Abraham (pbuh). When he reached the age of forty (in 610 CE), the angel Gabriel (pbuh) appeared before him in that cave one day and ordered him to recite. Muhammad (bpuh), in his terror, thought he was being asked to read, so he stammered that he was unlettered. The angel Gabriel (pbuh) again ordered him to read, but Muhammad

(bpuh) again informed him that he was unlettered. The angel Gabriel (pbuh) took hold of him firmly and commanded him, “Recite, in the name of your Lord, Who created!” Now Muhammad (bpuh) began to understand that he was not being asked to read, but to recite and to repeat. He began to repeat after him, and Gabriel (pbuh) revealed to him the first verses of the Quran that were revealed:

﴾Recite in the name of your Lord, Who created—created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous—Who taught by the pen—taught man that which he knew not.﴿

(Quran 96: 1-5)

As mentioned above, the actual word angel Gabriel (pbuh) used to address Muhammad (bpuh) was the Arabic word *iqra*, which means to read, recite, or rehearse. It is derived from the Arabic root word *qara*. However, if we were to go back to the original Hebrew form of the verses of Isaiah 29:11, we would find that the actual word which is translated into English as “Read this” is the Hebrew word *qara* [kaw-raw]. Is it just an amazing coincidence that the Hebrew text used not only a word with the same meaning, **but the exact same word itself**? Isaiah 29:11-18 reads:

> 11 And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot, for it is sealed.”
>
> 12 And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot read.”
>
> 13 And the Lord said: “Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,
>
> 14 therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden.”

> 15 Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?"
>
> 16 You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?
>
> 17 Is it not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest?
>
> 18 In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.

Remember that when a statement in the earlier scriptures is found also in the Quran, then this is proof of its validity. This is because if it is confirmed by the later scripture, it is clearly a remnant of the original revelation, which was not deleted or changed over time by those who rewrote the Bible.

15.5 Fulfilment of prophecies which he foretold

Proof 21: One may ask what criterion should be used to distinguish between a genuine prophet and false prophets (who might also presume to speak in the name of Allah)?

The answer to this question is clearly given in the concluding verses of Chapter 18 of the Book of Deuteronomy:

> And if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?'—when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:21-22)

Jesus (pbuh) is reported to have said about his successor, “He will declare to you the things that are to come.” (John 16:13)

It is a fact that not a single prophecy made by the Quran or by Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) has proved to be inaccurate in the least. Every prophecy made about the near future during his time did come to pass. Examples of these are:

- The prophecy that Muslims would conquer the two ‘superpowers’ of their time,[66] the Persian and Byzantine empires: This prophecy was made when Muslims were few and weak, when to prophesy their mere physical survival would have sounded too hopeful!
- Another prophecy was that Suraqah, a man who at one time was about to kill Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), would become a Muslim. Not only that he would become Muslim, but also that he would help the Muslim army conquer the Persian Empire and that he would have access to the Emperor’s crown, which would be placed on his head! Not only did this prophecy appear to be a virtual impossibility when it was made, but it was as if the Prophet (bpuh) was looking distinctly at a scene that took place years after his death. The facts that Suraqah did become a Muslim and lived long enough to participate in the conquest of Persia, that the Muslims came out victorious, and that Suraqah had access to the Emperor’s crown and actually wore it, can hardly be regarded as coincidence or a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Surely, it is no mere coincidence that so many of the prophecies that were described by the Prophet (bpuh) have actually happened, down to the last detail. (Some of the events that he foretold have not occurred yet.) Nor could such accuracy in each and every prophecy

[66] Found in the chapter titled “The Romans” *(Quran 30: 2-5).*

emanate from any individual other than a true and genuine prophet, according to the criterion stipulated in Deuteronomy 18:21-22.

Proof 22: Test of prophethood

Jesus (pbuh) himself provided a sort of "test", if you will, for anyone claiming prophethood:

> You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit... Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. (Matthew 7:16-20)

Anyone who applies this test to the teachings of Muhammad (bpuh) will find in the last testament of Allah—the noble Quran—the teachings which will bring to the world much-needed peace and happiness. (See Chapter 12: The Moral System in Islam.)

"The ultimate criterion of a true prophet is the moral character of his teaching."[67]

George Bernard Shaw said of Muhammad (bpuh):

> I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems, and that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness.[68]

15.6 The time when he was to appear

Proof 23: God's promise to make Ishmael (pbuh) a great nation

It is well-known that from the descendants of Ishmael (pbuh) came the last great prophet of monotheism, Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), whose followers constitute a great nation that makes up nearly one-fifth of the total world population in all corners of the earth today.

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[67] Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*.

[68] Shaw, *The Genuine Islam*, 1:8.

"And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring." (Genesis 21:13)

Genesis 21:18 says about Ishmael (pbuh), "I will make him into a great nation."

In Matthew 21:19-21, Jesus (pbuh) cursed a fruitless fig tree (a biblical symbol of the prophets' heritage), which immediately withered and died. In a later verse in the same chapter, Jesus (pbuh) said, "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits." (Matthew 21:43) That nation is made up of Ishmael's descendants (the rejected stone in Matthew 21:42).[69] It was victorious against all the superpowers of its time, as prophesied by Jesus (pbuh) when he said, "And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him." (Matthew 21:44)

Moreover, in the Old Testament, Genesis 12:1-3, it can be found that God Almighty promised to create "a great nation" from Ishmael (pbuh), Abraham's first son and the forefather of the Muslims:

> Now the LORD said to Abram [Abraham], "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3)

The quote "go... to the land that I will show you" is referring to the city of Paran (Makkah). The quote "I will make of you a great nation" is quite interesting; it describes perfectly the followers of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), namely the Muslims.

As you probably know, Muslims worship Allah Almighty by prostrating to Him. Every time they pray and prostrate, they end

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[69] "...The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone..." (Matthew 21:42)

their prayer by sitting on their knees and saying the following exact quote (translated from Arabic), "...and bless Prophet Muhammad and the family of Prophet Muhammad, as You have blessed Prophet Abraham and the family of Prophet Abraham..."

As can be clearly seen, Muslims bless Prophet Abraham (pbuh) every single day of their lives when praying to Allah Almighty. They also say "peace be upon him" or "peace and blessings be upon him" when they mention his name or any other prophet's name.

Yes, the Muslims are the "great nation" that Allah Almighty has talked about; they are blessed by Him because they worship none but Him, and they bless Abraham (pbuh) every day (no fewer than nine times) in their prayers.

Proof 24: According to the Gospel of John, the Jews were waiting for the fulfilment of three distinct prophecies.

The first was the coming of Christ. The second was the coming of Elijah. The third was **the coming of the prophet**. This is obvious from the three questions that were posed to John the Baptist.

> And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." (John 1:19-21)

If one looks in a Bible with cross-references,[70] he or she will find, in the marginal notes where the words "the Prophet" occur in John 1:21, that these words refer to the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18:18 (about raising up a prophet from their brothers). It can be concluded from this that Muhammad (bpuh) is the prophet mentioned there, because he is the only prophet who came after Prophet Jesus (pbuh), and he is the one who is "like unto him." Furthermore, it

[70] Nowadays, we can do this easily online. (Editor)

is obvious that the Jews and John knew that “the Prophet” and the Christ were two different persons, since each was referred to by a separate question.

Proof 25: John 16:7

Jesus (pbuh) is reported to have said:

> Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. **But if I go, I will send him to you.** (John 16:7)

Some Bible commentaries explain that the term ‘Helper’ (which is sometimes translated as ‘Comforter’ or ‘Advocate’) refers to the Holy Spirit. This would not make sense because—according to the Gospels—the Holy Spirit was already present in the world, prior to Jesus’ birth as well as during his ministry. Luke 3:22 has mentioned that the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus (pbuh) in the shape of a dove. However, this verse (John 16:7) implies that the “Helper” is yet to come and cannot come until Jesus leaves the earth.

15.7 The unique proof

Proof 26: One of the proofs that Muhammad (bpuh) was the prophet mentioned in the Bible is that the message he came with has reached across the East and the West, and his community now extends all over the world, something which would not have occurred if he had not been a prophet.

15.8 The lack of warnings from previous prophets

Proof 27: Had Muhammad (bpuh) not been the mentioned prophet, then the prophets who came before him, especially Moses (pbuh) and Jesus (pbuh), would have done two things: first, they would have

mentioned whom they referred to exactly, and second, they would have warned their peoples vehemently about Muhammad (bpuh), and we would have seen this in their scriptures. This is because all the prophets warned about false prophets and cautioned their peoples about following them and being guided by them. For example, the previous prophets mentioned the Antichrist by name, and even Noah (pbuh), who was the first messenger, warned his people about him. However, none of the prophets warned about Muhammad (bpuh). In fact, quite the contrary: Jesus gave good tidings of Muhammad (bpuh), praised him, ordered people to follow him, and forbade them from opposing or disobeying him.

15.9 The consistency between Muhammad′s and Jesus′ teachings

Proof 28: One important proof that Muhammad (bpuh) is the prophet foretold in the Biblical references is the absolute consistency between the original (undistorted) teaching with which Jesus and other prophets were sent and those with which Muhammad (bpuh) came. To clarify, these are: calling to monotheism, glorifying Allah in His supreme attributes, believing in the Oneness of Allah in His essence, forbidding people from ascribing any of Allah’s attributes to him, and many others.[71] This is not a surprise, because every prophet revived the basic beliefs that had been distorted over time after the departure of the preceding prophet. Islam, being the final message, revived the basic beliefs and practices of all the preceding messages, including the message of Jesus (pbuh). It clarified it and removed the misconceptions which had become attached to the pure creed with which Jesus was sent, so that people would find it clear and straightforward to follow.

As the well-known scholar and commentator on the Quran, Abdur-Rahman ibn Nasir as-Sadi, wrote:

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[71] See Chapter 17: Islam’s Revival of the Basic Teachings of Jesus (pbuh).

If Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) was not a true prophet, then his message would have contradicted the common message of Jesus and other prophets before him. Instead, it revived it and re-instated it.

It should now be clear that the Biblical prophecies speak of none other than Muhammad (bpuh). Many thanks to Allah, Who made the path clear for us. It is interesting to note that in year 571 CE, Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled. Muhammad (bpuh) was born into a community of Ishmaelite Arabs who had become polytheists and idolaters; when he reached maturity and was given revelation, Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) started preaching his message of the worship of Allah alone.

In the year 632 CE, he left this world; however, his bright message will remain with people until the end of this world.

Being a true follower of Jesus (pbuh) must involve more than lip service, wherein one merely says that he or she follows or loves Jesus (pbuh) in order to attain paradise and be saved from hellfire, and that is it. True followers of Christ should accept his prophecy about Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) and follow his teachings of 'Islam', or complete and devoted submission to the One and Only God: Allah.

Note: Not only did Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) vouch for Jesus' and Moses' prophethood, but he also testified to the prophethood of all the true prophets who had been sent before him. He neither denied any of them nor fabricated anything about them. This was unlike what the reigning kings usually do against the kings who have reigned before them. Had Muhammad (bpuh) been a liar or a fabricator of his message (Islam), he would have not spoken of their truthfulness or praised them the way he actually did. He would have lied about them, which was the practice of the enemies of God's messengers throughout history!

Indeed, God Almighty has mentioned this very fact about Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) in the Quran:

﴾Rather, the Prophet has come with the truth and confirmed the [previous] messengers.﴿ *(Quran 37: 37)*

16. THE FACTS ABOUT ORIGINAL SIN[72]

20 Arguments regarding the doctrine of original sin

Background

According to the explanation of this doctrine, Adam sinned when he disobeyed Allah, the Exalted, and ate from the forbidden tree. According to Christian theology,[73] the following eight doctrines branch off from the original sin principle:

1. All of Adam's descendants inherit his sin, which means that all human beings (with the exception of Mary) are born with this original sin on their account.
2. For God's justice to be achieved, a price must be paid as a penalty for every sin that has been committed, in order for that sin to be wiped out and for the individual to be forgiven.
3. The only way to wipe out sin is to shed blood; according to Paul, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." (Hebrews 9:22)
4. This blood must be perfect, sinless, and incorruptible.
5. Jesus (pbuh) alone can pay the infinite price of sin because his blood is perfect, sinless, and incorruptible, and he is the (alleged) son of God, the infinite God.

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[72] Compiled from Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Led Me to Islam*.

[73] This section is based on the view of original sin and atonement as generally understood by Roman Catholics and Protestants. It must be noted that some Christians have other views; the Eastern Orthodox churches in particular do not teach that all of humankind inherited the guilt of Adam's sin. A detailed discussion of the various beliefs is beyond the scope of this book.

6. Jesus shed his holy sinless blood, suffered indescribable agony, and died to pay for the sins of people. This concept is known as 'atonement'.
7. No one can be saved (attain salvation) without accepting Jesus Christ as his or her redeemer. In other words, salvation is restricted to those who believe that Jesus was willingly crucified, died on the cross, and shed his blood as a price of that sin. Acceptance of this doctrine is the only way to attain 'salvation'.
8. Otherwise, everyone is condemned to suffer eternally in hell because of his or her sinful nature and the sin originally inherited from the father of humankind, Adam.

The doctrine of original sin can be divided into six distinct parts:

1. The factuality of the existence of original sin.
2. Humanity's inheritance of the original sin.
3. Belief that God's justice requires a penalty of blood, which must be paid against that sin.
4. Belief that Jesus has paid the price for the sins of all humankind by sacrificing his blood and dying on the cross.
5. The rationality of the "God's sacrifice" dogma.
6. Salvation from sin (original and newly attained) is only possible for those who believe in his vicarious sacrifice.

Analysis

Arguments against the six parts of the dogma of original sin are as follows:

Argument against the first part: the factuality of original sin

1. There is no conflict between the Quranic verses and Christian theology with reference to the fact that Adam committed a sin when he ate from the forbidden tree. However, Allah has mentioned in the Quran that Prophet Adam repented after that

and submitted himself completely to his Lord; consequently, he was forgiven by Allah for the sin he had committed. This is a tenet of Islamic belief and has been mentioned in three different chapters in the Quran (in verses 2: 37, 7: 24 and 20: 122). Based on Adam's repentance and Allah's acceptance of his repentance, the sin of Adam was not inherited by his children. Hence, it did not require the suffering and death of Jesus Christ (or of anyone else) in order to be forgiven.

Argument against the second part: "All human beings inherited Adam's sin"

2. The doctrine of inherited sin has no support from the teachings of Jesus.
3. Indeed, Jesus himself regarded children as innocent and pure, **not born in sin**. This is clear from his reported saying:

   Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. (Mark 10:14-15)
4. The doctrine of the inherited sin implies that all of the people who came after Adam but before Jesus were born with original sin and died with it on their account; hence, all of them will be cast into hellfire because they did not even know of this dogma, and thus could not profess it! And if that were true, what would have been the purpose of all the prophets who came before Jesus? If it were true, why would they all have hidden that from their people?
5. The doctrine of inherited sin has **no support in the words of the prophets who came either before or after Jesus.** If it was required by God, then they would have told their people about it and taught them to believe in it, because all prophets were sent to guide people towards paradise and ward them away from sins and hellfire.

6. All the prophets taught that every human being is accountable for his or her own sins, so children will not be punished for the sins of their fathers. Allah has mentioned in the Quran:

   ﴾That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another.﴿ *(Quran 53: 38)*

   He has also said:

   ﴾Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained.﴿ *(Quran 74: 38)*

7. Sin, as it is said, is not inherited; it is something that people acquire for themselves by doing what they should not do or by refraining from doing what they should do. Considered rationally, it would be the height of injustice to condemn the entire human race for a sin committed thousands of years ago by the first parents. Sin is a wilful transgression of the law of Allah. The responsibility or blame for it must lie only with the person committing it, **and not on his or her descendants**. It is the height of misanthropy to even consider such a thing. How unreasonable and hard-hearted a person can become by believing that every baby is sinful at birth!
8. Saying that the original sin committed by our father, Adam (pbuh), was inherited by all humanity goes against the attribute of mercy which Allah attributes to Himself. It is clear that the creed of the inheritance of the original sin has no place whatsoever in Islamic teachings.

Argument against the third part: Blood penalty

The third part of the original sin doctrine says that God's justice requires that a price be paid for the sins of humankind (original and otherwise) and that if God were to pardon (forgive) a sinner without punishment, it would be a denial of His justice.

The response to that has two points:

9. This view reflects complete ignorance of two of Allah's attributes, namely mercy and forgiveness. To elaborate, if Allah

finds some real good in you and sees that you are sincerely repentant, having a genuine urge to conquer the evil within you, then Almighty Allah will forgive your failings and sins, out of His loving mercy and forgiveness.

10. The God Whom we worship (Allah) is the Most Strong and Most Rich; no one can harm Him. Consequently, if He prescribes a law and demands obedience, then it is not for His own benefit to abide by it; it is for the benefit of humankind. If we disobey Him, we are the losers, not Allah. If He punishes a person before death for his or her faults and sins, it is not for His own satisfaction or compensation but in order to check evil and to purify/reform the sinner, out of His mercy. Bearing these facts in mind, it is not valid to claim that Allah's justice requires a price to be paid for the sins of others.

Argument against the fourth part of the original sin doctrine: Jesus (pbuh) was sacrificed for humanity

The fourth part of the original sin doctrine says that Jesus (pbuh) paid the penalty for all sins (original sins and any others) by sacrificing his blood on the cross of Calvary. The response to this proposition has ten points:

11. The Christian concept of salvation has no basis in the words of Jesus (pbuh). It is not historically correct to say that Jesus (pbuh) had come to die willingly and deliberately for the sins of all humanity. In reality, the present form of the Bible testifies that he **did not wish to die on the cross**.[74]

12. Indeed, the Bible points to the fact that God (Allah), not Jesus (pbuh), is the **ultimate saviour:**

    ...That you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any

[74] And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." (Mark 14:36)

after me. I, I am the Lord, **and besides Me there is no savior**. (Isaiah 43:10-11)

13. To punish a man who is not guilty for the sins of others is the height of injustice, harshness and lack of mercy, and these cannot be attributed to the Almighty.
14. Rationally, we cannot accept that the suffering and death of one man can wipe out the sins of others. It is similar to a father, for example, removing one of his good teeth to relieve the pain of his child's bad tooth. Hence, the idea of crucifixion is false and illogical.
15. Jesus (like all the other prophets) was sent to convey a message and to be an example for his followers during his time on the earth. He was not sent to deliberately die for them on the cross or offer his blood to absolve their sins.
16. Allah has mentioned in the Quran that He is the Most Merciful and Most Compassionate; He forgives sinners, no matter how many and how evil their sins, once they repent. He may even forgive sinners who do not repent, according to His will, mercy and favour.
17. The concept of atonement is false because it indirectly encourages people to sin, thinking that their sins will be wiped out through someone else once they believe in him! Furthermore, if someone died for another person's sins, what is the point of adhering to good and forbidding evil?

Argument against the fifth part: the 'sacrifice' of Jesus (pbuh)

18. Christian doctrine states that Jesus (pbuh) was crucified by the administration of the Roman governor of Jerusalem, Pontius Pilate, with the cooperation of certain Jewish leaders.[75] However, the Quran has explained that Jesus did not die; rather, Allah

[75] Harrington, "Who Killed Jesus?"

raised him when they attempted to kill him. Allah replaced him with another person who resembled him, and it was this other person who was killed. To this day, the Christians believe that Jesus himself was the one who was killed on the cross, but Allah has mentioned in the Quran:

﴾And [for] their saying: Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah. And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.﴿ *(Quran 4: 157-158)*

19. Here is another proof that Jesus was not killed. In the Islamic teachings, there is clear evidence indicating the second coming of Jesus before the final hour; this is an additional and final miracle for Jesus. He will return not as God, as the Christians believe, but as Jesus, Allah's messenger and slave, as he has always been. One of the purposes of his coming will be to correct the misconceptions surrounding his message and mission. According to a statement of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), he will stay for forty years, and these will be the happiest years of life on this earth. During that time, those who had misconceptions about him will correct their understanding and believe in him as a messenger, not as the son of God (Allah).

«It was narrated by Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (bpuh) said:

By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, it will not be long before the son of Mary descends amongst you, a just judge and ruler. He will break the cross, kill the swine and abolish the tax paid by Jews and Christians. Money will be so plentiful that no one

will accept it. At that time, a single prostration will be better than this world and everything in it.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) then said: Read if you wish (the following verse of the Quran):

﴾And there is none from the People of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in Jesus before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be against them a witness.﴿

(Quran 4: 159)»

(Recorded by Imam Bukhari)

This ends the answer of the fifth part of the doctrine.

Argument against the sixth part: Salvation only possible via belief in Christ's vicarious 'sacrifice'

20. The Bible itself contradicts the notion of original sin. In this regard, the Bible says about the dispute concerning original sin:

    He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. (I Corinthians 3:8)

    It also says:

    The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. (Ezekiel 18:20)

Original sin and atonement from an Islamic perspective

Islam declares that:

- People cannot transfer their responsibilities to saviours or saints. Each person's redemption and salvation depends upon his or her own deeds.

- Forgiveness of sins (salvation) can only be attained through repentance to Allah and sincere and persistent efforts to fight off evil and do good. Allah forgives the faults and sins of those in whom He sees real goodness and those who have turned away from their sins and reformed themselves—without punishing them **or any other person on their behalf.**

In numerous verses in the Quran and statements of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), it is mentioned that **those who repent are granted** forgiveness from sins; furthermore, their sins are replaced with an equivalent reward.

﴾…And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.﴿

(Quran 2: 112)

In many verses of the noble Quran, Allah Almighty calls on people to repent sincerely.

﴾ [O Muhammad,] inform My slaves that it is I Who am the Forgiving, the Merciful, and that it is My punishment which is the painful punishment.﴿ *(Quran 15: 49-50)*

Here, Allah is inviting the sinners to repent; regardless of the magnitude of their sins, He will forgive them. At the same time, He is warning those who do not repent that no punishment can be compared to His punishment.

He has also said:

﴾Say: O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return [in repentance] to your Lord and submit to Him before the punishment comes upon you; then you will not be helped.﴿ *(Quran 39: 53-54)*

See how beautifully, soundly and logically the Book of Allah, the Quran, addresses the issue of sinning and atonement. It must be noted that Islam confirms that the Islamic approach to the subject was

revealed in all the divine messages, including the message of Jesus Christ. May peace and blessings be upon him and all the prophets!

Conclusion

By maintaining the concept of original sin, the entire notion of justice in Christian theology becomes flawed. An analysis of the six tenets of this doctrine, along with the arguments against them, proves that the structure of the whole principle of original sin and atonement is false as it has no support either in the revealed scriptures or in logic; rather, it is clearly a man-made dogma developed in the Christian Church.

17. ISLAM'S REVIVAL OF THE BASIC TEACHINGS OF JESUS[76]

Introduction

All prophets were sent with the same message: monotheism in the worship of Allah, the Exalted, and testifying to the supremacy of His attributes as well as the Oneness of His essence. However, their messages may differ in terms of legislation (Sharia), for instance, regarding the manner of performing prayers, fasting, types of charity and so on. This depends upon each nation's characteristics, according to Allah's wisdom, for He knows His creatures better than they know themselves.

Every prophet revived the basic beliefs that had been distorted since the departure of the preceding prophet. Islam, being the final message, revived the basic beliefs and practices of all the preceding messages, including the message of Jesus. It elaborated them so that people would find them clear and straightforward to follow.

Following are some basic teachings which were established by Prophet Jesus and were later revived in the message of Islam:

17.1 Revival of the creed of Allah's Oneness of essence

This fundamental principle was taught by Jesus (pbuh), as quoted below, but then abandoned by most Christians. It was revived by the message of Islam. All praise and thanks are for Allah for His guidance.

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[76] Compiled from Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ* and Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Led Me to Islam.*

Here are fourteen proofs from the Bible and rational thought regarding Allah's Oneness in His essence, negating the doctrine of the Trinity:

1. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. (Deuteronomy 6:4)
2. ...that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior. (Isaiah 43:10-11)
3. I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. Who is like me? (Isaiah 44:6-7)
4. And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. Turn to me and be saved… To me every knee shall bow. (Isaiah 45:21-23)
5. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.[77] (John 17:3)
6. Worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve. (Matthew 4:10)
7. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. (Mark 12:29)
8. I am the LORD, and there is no other. I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness… I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right. (Isaiah 45:18-19)
9. An additional important proof from the Bible that God (Allah), Jesus (pbuh), and the Holy Spirit are each distinct in their essence: the Bible (the Old and New Testaments) does not state anywhere that Allah, Jesus (pbuh) and the Holy Spirit comprise one entity called God, or one of the three. This is merely a product of man-made, illogical, pagan thinking which people

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[77] This verse indicates very clearly the distinction between Allah as God and Jesus as a prophet.

have blindly inherited from their parents and grandparents through ages and generations, without any rational assessment or validation.

10. The following biblical verses, referring to God (Allah), contradict the creed of the Trinity in an indirect way:
    - His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen. (John 5:37)
    - ...whom no one has ever seen or can see. (1Timothy 6:16)
    - ...you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live. (Exodus 33:20)

    According to these biblical verses, no one can see or hear God, yet God is supposed to be Jesus (pbuh) according to Christian belief. In that case, these verses would make no sense because Jesus' family and followers, the Jews, and many other contemporaries saw and heard him during his lifetime. Obviously, these verses cannot be talking about Jesus; they must be referring to someone else: to God (Allah), the Highest, Whom no one can see or hear.
11. It is curious, too, that Jesus himself never mentioned the Trinity. He did not say anything regarding divine entities forming a trinity. If there was a trinity, he would have said it very clearly to his people, because prophets came to convey the truth, not to hide it.
12. The concept that Jesus (pbuh) held about Allah was no different from the concept that all the previous prophets had held. All of them preached the Oneness of Allah instead of the concept of a 'Trinity'. Jesus taught the same monotheistic, unitarian message that had been revealed to all the prophets who came before him.
13. The doctrine of Trinity is irrational because nothing that comes out of Him or is created by Him can become His equal or partner.

14. The Quran rejects the concept of Trinity as strongly as it rejects the idea that Allah has a son. This is because Allah has informed us that He is One. This is a **fundamental tenet** of all the revelations. Three, by reason and by simple arithmetic, cannot be one. The Quran has addressed Christians on this subject:

    ﴾O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah and His word which He directed to Mary and a soul [created at a command] from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers. And do not say: Three; desist—it is better for you. Indeed, Allah is but one God. Exalted is He above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs.﴿ *(Quran 4: 171)*

Islam revived the concept of Allah's Oneness in essence. It absolutely negated the doctrine of sonship (that Jesus is the son of God and, as such, is both human and divine) and the doctrine which states that Allah is Jesus (pbuh). Allah has said:

﴾They have certainly disbelieved who say: Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary…﴿ *(Quran 5: 72)*

He has also said in the noble Quran:

﴾Say: He is Allah, [Who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets, nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.﴿ *(Quran 112: 1-4)*

17.2 Revival of Allah's supremacy in terms of His attributes and qualities

Allah has multiple and supreme attributes. He is the Most Gracious and Most Merciful. He was praised in all the revealed books and through the words of all His prophets. According to the Bible, Jesus (pbuh) taught that Allah is supreme in His attributes.

> And behold, a man came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?"
>
> And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one [i.e., God] who is good. (Matthew 19:16-17)

He denied the attribution of 'infinite goodness' or 'perfect goodness' to himself, and affirmed that this attribute belongs to Allah alone.

In Isaiah (44:6-7, RSV), it has been reported that God (Allah) says, "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. **Who is like Me?**"

Islam effectively revived this basic concept. Numerous verses in the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) affirm that Allah:

- Has no partners or equals.
- Is 'invisible' because He is over His throne, and over the heavens, and no one can see Him in this life.
- Is not physically manifested or incarnated in other forms.
- Is eternal; He does not die.
- Begets not, nor is He begotten; He does not need anyone like a mother, a wife or a son.
- Has no partners in His Godhead.
- Is self-sufficient; everyone depends upon Him and needs Him, but He neither depends upon anyone nor needs anything (such as food, drink or help). For example, Allah has said in the Quran:

﴾…There is nothing like unto Him…﴿ *(Quran 42: 11)*

﴾So do not assert similarities to Allah. Indeed, Allah knows and you do not know.﴿ *(Quran 16: 74)*

﴾…and for Allah is the highest attribute. And He is Exalted in Might, the Wise.﴿ *(Quran 16: 60)*

This basic part of belief (that Allah deserves the best names and attributes) has been emphasized repeatedly in the noble Quran. This is

evident to the reader of the Quran, who finds that numerous Quranic verses end with a reference to a divine attribute, such as ﴾the All-Hearing, All-Seeing﴿, ﴾the Most Forgiving, the All-Compassionate﴿, and ﴾the Most High, the Most Great﴿.

17.3 Revival of the doctrine of monotheism (worship of Allah alone)

As mentioned earlier, the call to believe in Allah alone (monotheism), without any intermediary, was the message of all the prophets; therefore, any acts of worship must be directed to Allah alone. Because of the persisting deviation in this doctrine, it has had to be reaffirmed by all of the prophets of Allah throughout the ages. The monotheistic message of Islam simply tells people that they should worship Allah only and that they should not worship anyone or anything other than Allah, in any way, shape or form.

However, Christians now call upon (supplicate to) Jesus (and others) besides Allah. Moreover, they direct all types of worship to Jesus. Associating others with Allah is nothing but polytheism. Surprisingly, although the text of the Bible has been altered significantly, it still contains evidence that Jesus called others towards monotheism:

- In Luke 4:5-7, the devil asked Jesus to worship him, promising him the authority and glory of all of the kingdoms of this world.

  > And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, **and him only shall you serve**.'" (Luke 4:8)

- **And there is no other god besides me**, a righteous God and a Savior; there is **none besides me. Turn to Me** and be saved…**To Me every knee shall bow**. (Isaiah 45:21-23)
- **Turn to me** and be saved, all the ends of the earth! **For I am God, and there is no other.** (Isaiah 45:22)
- **You shall worship the Lord** your God and **him only** shall you serve. (Matthew 4:10)

- In the Bible, the true God emphatically testifies:

> I am the LORD, and there is **no other.** I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness… I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right. (Isaiah 45:18-19)

Thus, the essence of the message of Jesus was that only Allah deserves to be worshipped; the worship of anyone or anything besides Allah or along with Him is false. It is important to note that worshipping others besides God is a major alteration of Jesus' message because it was never reported in the Bible that Jesus (pbuh) wanted anyone to worship him either directly or indirectly through idols such as a statue of him or a cross.

After Jesus departed, the call to monotheism became distorted by later followers, beginning with Paul, who turned that pure and simple message into a complicated Trinitarian philosophy which justified the worship of Jesus, followed by what some consider to be worship of Jesus' mother, Mary, the angels and the saints. Catholics have a long list of saints to whom they turn in times of need.

Worshipping others besides Allah is irrational and in vain because neither the living nor the dead can answer the prayers (supplications) of humankind. The worship of Allah should not be shared with His creation, because they are people just like us; they are not the creators. They are weak creatures like us; they need food, drink, shelter and help, and after their death (or ascension, in the case of Jesus), they cannot even hear the ones who call them!

Islam revived the doctrine of monotheism. For example, Allah has mentioned in the Quran:

﴾They have certainly disbelieved who say: Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary, while the Messiah has said: O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed, he who associates others with Allah—Allah has forbidden him paradise, and his abode is the fire. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers.﴿ *(Quran 5: 72)*

﴾Indeed, those you [polytheists] call upon besides Allah are slaves like you...﴿ *(Quran 7: 194)*

﴾…Is there a deity with Allah? High is Allah above whatever they associate with Him.﴿ *(Quran 27: 63)*

﴾…Is there a deity with Allah? Say: Produce your proof, if you should be truthful.﴿ *(Quran 27: 64)*

﴾And I did not create the jinn and humankind except to worship Me.﴿ *(Quran 51: 56)*

Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) said:

«Supplication is an essential act of worship.» (An authentic hadith narrated by Imams at-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawood)

Consequently, if a person claims to be a Muslim but prays to a prophet, saint, statue or anything else, then he or she has stepped out of the bounds of Islam.

Thus, according to these affirmations, all other supposed gods and deities whom people worship and call upon, like Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Brahma, Shiva, Krishna, or Buddha are not gods; nor are they manifestations of the one true God (Allah). Even if someone were to worship Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), the same punishment mentioned above would apply to him.

17.4 Revival of the creed of Jesus′ prophethood

Nine Biblical proofs of Jesus′ prophethood

There are many verses in the New Testament which affirm Jesus' prophethood and not divinity.

1. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you **have sent**.[78] (John 17:3)

[78] This verse indicates very clearly the distinction between God, the deity, and Jesus, the prophet. See also John 4:34, 5:30, 7:16, 7:28, 11:42, 13:16 and 14:24.

2. The people of his time are recorded as referring to Jesus as a prophet. "And the crowds said, 'This is the **prophet Jesus**, from Nazareth of Galilee.'" (Matthew 21:11)
3. Jesus referred to himself as a prophet. "And Jesus said to them, '**A prophet** is not without honour, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.'" (Mark 6:4)
4. In the previous verses, Jesus is referred to as having been sent as a messenger. In Matthew 10:40, Jesus was purported to have said, "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who **sent me**."
5. It is narrated that Jesus also said:

    I can do nothing on my own. **As I hear, I judge**, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him **who sent me**. (John 5:30)

6. Jesus was also reported to have been referred to as a 'teacher', which is the role of all the prophets.

    And behold, a man came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" (Matthew 19:16)

7. In Matthew 19:17, Jesus responded to the one who addressed him as "Teacher", saying, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is **only one [i.e., God] who is good**." Jesus here rejects being called 'good' and states that only God is truly good; he clearly implies that he is not God. Also, Jesus here rejects being called 'perfectly good', because perfection belongs only to God (Allah).
8. In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus stated:

    Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

9. In Matthew 5:19, Jesus Christ, in accordance with the role of any prophet, was reported to have insisted on strict obedience to the commandments of Allah:

> Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

17.5 Revival of the doctrine of Jesus′ humanness

No evidence in the Bible for the divinity of Jesus (pbuh)

Nowhere in the Gospels was Jesus reported to have called himself 'God' or one of three. If this were the case, then it would have been mentioned very clearly in the Bible at least once because Jesus—like all other prophets—was sent to enlighten his people about the truth and clear up doubts, not to confuse them further.

Indeed, the Bible in its present form points to Jesus' humanness. Even in some of the writings of Paul, which the Church considers sacred, Jesus is referred to as a man, distinct and different from God (Allah). In 1 Timothy, 2:5, Paul writes, "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus**."[79]

Today, many modern scholars in Christianity hold that Jesus Christ was not 'God'.

In 1977, a group of seven biblical scholars, including leading Anglican theologians and other New Testament scholars, published a book called *The Myth of God Incarnate*, which caused a great uproar

[79] All the messengers are mediators between God and people in the sense that they are His messengers, who deliver His message.

in the General Synod of the Church of England. In the preface, the editor, John Hick, wrote:

> The writers of this book are convinced that another major theological development is called for in this last part of the twentieth century. The need arises from growing knowledge of Christian origins, and involves a recognition that Jesus was (as he is presented in Act 2.21) 'a man approved by God' for a special role within the divine purpose, and that the later conception of him as God incarnate, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity living a human life, is a mythological or poetic way of expressing his significance for us.[80]

It should be noted that the concept of Jesus' humanness is held not only by Muslims but also by Jews and some early sects of Christianity such as the Ebionites (Nazarenes), Cerinthians, Basilidians and Goths. These sects maintained that Jesus was a beloved prophet of God, and they did not elevate him above his rightful status. Even today, there are churches in Asia and Africa, in addition to the Unitarian church and Jehovah's Witnesses, who do not worship Jesus as God. It is important to stress, though, that denying the divinity of Jesus is not enough to free them on the Day of Judgement unless they also accept Islam, Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), and the last revelation from Allah.

The truth about sonship[81]

In the Bible, the expression 'son' has been used to refer to many of the earlier prophets. Israel, for example, was called the 'Son of God' in one of the books of Moses, "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is **my firstborn son**." (Exodus 4:22)

The same title was given to David.

> I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "**You are my Son**; today I have begotten you. (Psalms 2:7)

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[80] Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 61.

[81] Compiled from Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Led Me to Islam*.

Likewise, Prophet Solomon was called the Son of God.

> He shall build a house for my name. He shall be **my son**, and I will be **his father**, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel forever. (I Chronicles, 22:10)

Throughout the Bible, the word 'son' is used to refer to '**nearness to God in love**'. This is ascertained when we see Jesus himself saying that every man who did **the will of the Father** in heaven was a Son of God.

Jesus was reported to have said in the following verses:

> Love your enemies… so that you may be **sons of your Father** who is in Heaven. (Matthew 5:44-45)
>
> Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the **sons of God**. (Matthew 5:9)

Hence, what made a man worthy of being called a 'Son of God' was a devout life and kind, merciful behaviour.

The Bible proves that Jesus actually rejected being called 'Son of God':

> And demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" **But he rebuked them** and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ. (Luke 4:41)

In view of the above, there is **no justification for regarding Jesus as the Son of God in an exclusive and unique meaning**. When Jesus used the phrase 'Son of God', it **meant exactly the same as it meant when it was used for Adam, Israel, David and Solomon** (peace be upon them)—that is, the nearest in love to God.

The humanness and prophethood of Jesus (pbuh) is affirmed in many verses of the Quran to correct the grave mistake of elevating him to the status of God (Allah) or describing him as the Son of God (Allah).

In eleven different passages of the Quran, found in nine different chapters, Allah has denied having a son: 2: 116, 10: 68, 11: 117,

18: 4, 19: 77, 19: 88, 19: 91-92, 21: 26, 25: 2, 39: 4, and 72: 3. For example, He says:

﴾And they say: The Most Merciful has taken [for Himself] a son. You have done an atrocious thing. The heavens almost rupture therefrom and the earth splits open and the mountains collapse in devastation that they attribute to the Most Merciful a son. And it is not appropriate for the Most Merciful that He should take a son. There is no one in the heavens and earth but that he comes to the Most Merciful as a slave. He has enumerated them and counted them a [full] counting. And all of them are coming to Him on the Day of Resurrection alone.﴿

(Quran 19: 88-95)

Allah, the Exalted, has also mentioned:

﴾The Messiah, son of Mary, was not but a messenger; [other] messengers have passed on before him. And his mother was a supporter of truth. They both used to eat food. Look how We make clear to them the signs; then look how they are deluded.﴿ *(Quran 5: 75)*

Clearly, the idea that Jesus was God or that he was the son of God is textually weak and logically impossible.

Important notes

1. In none of the Christian or Muslim scriptures did Mary claim that she was a mother of God or that her son was a God. As mentioned in the Quran, she was a pious, virtuous woman who worshipped God. It was never reported in the Bible that Jesus (pbuh) instructed anyone to pray to pictures or statues of her, and he never did this himself.
2. As a precautionary measure, there are many verses in the Quran that also confirm Prophet Muhammad's human attributes, in order to prevent his followers from elevating him to a divine or semi-divine status as happened in the case of Prophet Jesus (pbuh).

For example, in Chapter 18, Allah instructs Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) to inform all those who hear his message:

﴾Say: I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God. So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord—let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.﴿ *(Quran 18: 110)*

17.6 Revival of the doctrine of Jesus′ ascension (negating the crucifixion)

Some of the changes made to Prophet Jesus' message after his ascension are so fundamental that they **strike at the very root of Christianity.** For example, the only two references to the ascension of Jesus that were found in the Gospels of Mark and Luke in the King James Version (KJV) were removed from the 1952 Revised Standard Version (RSV). Before the removal of these passages, the relevant verses read as follows:

"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, **he was received up into heaven**, and sat on the right hand of God." (Mark 16:19, KJV)

"And it came to pass; while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and **carried up to heaven**." (Luke 24:51, KJV)

The relevant verse in the Gospel of Mark was removed, along with a number of other verses that immediately preceded and succeeded it, sixteen verses in total.

In the 1952 RSV, Luke 24:51 read, "While he blessed them, he parted from them." The words "carried up to heaven" had been removed.[82]

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[82] The verses numbered Mark 16:9-20, as well as the words "carried up to heaven" in Luke 24:51, were restored in 1971, and they are found in today's RSV with a footnote explaining that some of these verses were not found in early manuscripts. (Editor)

Islam revived the creed of Jesus' ascension. The Quran confirms the earliest scriptures, which inform us that Allah raised him when his enemies attempted to crucify him. Allah replaced Jesus with another person who resembled him, and in reality, it was this other person who was crucified. To this day, Christians believe that Jesus himself was the one who was killed, and to commemorate that, many wear crosses or crucifixes or hang them in their homes, even though Jesus (pbuh) never asked them to do that.

Allah has mentioned in the Quran:

﴾And [for] their saying: Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah. And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.﴿

(Quran 4: 157-158)

17.7 Revival of the prohibition of augury[83]

Knowledge of what is going to happen in the future is an attribute of Allah alone. No one knows what will happen in the near or distant future except Him. The revealed scriptures prohibited augury and witchcraft because those who engage in these practices try to raise themselves to the level of Allah in terms of assuming one of His divine attributes.

Forecasting the weather is not considered part of augury and witchcraft because weather forecasters depend upon physical measurements and mathematical calculations. This is unlike augury

[83] Augury has many meanings, some of which are: prognostication, prophecy and divination. Of course, prophecy is a gift that Allah gave to the prophets alone.

and witchcraft, where a person claims to know what is going to happen in the future, just like Allah knows. In fact, He alone is All-Knowing.

Jesus prohibited augury and witchcraft. Leviticus 19:26 says, "You shall not eat any flesh with the blood in it. You shall not interpret omens or tell fortunes."

Islam revived this doctrine that Allah alone knows the future. Allah has mentioned:

﴾…The unseen is only for Allah [to administer]…﴿ *(Quran 10: 20)*

﴾Say: None in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except Allah, and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected.﴿

(Quran 27: 65)

Based on this, Islam strictly prohibits consulting fortune-tellers, clairvoyants and the like. Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) said:

«If anyone consults a fortune-teller or sooth-sayer and believes in what he (or she) says, then (that person) has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad (bpuh).» (Recorded by Imams Bukhari and Abu Dawood)

17.8 Revival of the prohibition of witchcraft

Referring to the Old Testament quotation above (Leviticus 19:26), witchcraft is prohibited in the teachings of Moses, Jesus and all the prophets (peace be upon them all). The reason for this is that sorcerers and practitioners of the occult seek satanic assistance to do their magic, and this is against the teachings of all the prophets.

Islam revived the prohibition of witchcraft.

«Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) said: Avoid the seven great destructive sins.

His Companions asked: O Allah's Messenger, what are they?

He said: To worship others besides Allah, **to practice sorcery**...» (Recorded by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

Revival of the prohibition of harmful practices

Without doubt, the doctrinal teachings about the nature of Allah and Jesus were revived by the religion of Islam. At the same time, some of the prohibitions (related to practices harmful to the individual and/or to society) taught by Jesus and the earlier prophets were revived as well.

17.9 Revival of the prohibition of taking interest

Upholding the law, Prophet Jesus opposed the giving or taking of interest because the texts of the Old Testament expressly forbid interest.

> You shall not charge interest on loans to your brother, interest on money, interest on food, interest on anything that is lent for interest. (Deuteronomy 23:19)

Islam revived what Jesus taught regarding the prohibition of interest:

﴾O you who have believed, fear Allah and give up what remains [due to you] of interest, if you should be believers.﴿ *(Quran 2: 278)*

There is great wisdom in the prohibition of interest. Firstly, the one who earns income through interest does so without working for it; in contrast, Islam strongly encourages one to work for a living. Secondly, the one who borrows does so due to a lack of financial resources, but due to interest, the debt creates an even greater burden because the borrower must repay the principle coupled with interest charges. Thirdly, a system based on interest can lead to inflation, recession and even a complete collapse of financial markets, as we have witnessed in our time. Many nations in both the developed and developing worlds have become enslaved by the system of usury and interest.

It is undisputed that the 2008-2009 world economic downturn (and possible collapse of many world economies), which started in the United States and spread to Europe and Asia, was caused directly

by excessive lending in amounts several times more than the actual worth of the assets in loans. The interest charges were spread over many resold loans, resulting in an exaggerated and unrealistic inflation of the value of the actual money lent. This false representation of value meant that it would be impossible for most debtors to pay back such loans.

Allah, the Almighty, forbade usury in three places in the Quran (2: 275-278; 3: 130; and 4: 161).

﴾Those who consume interest cannot stand [on the Day of Resurrection] except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity. That is because they say: Trade is [just] like interest. But Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest. So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah. But whoever returns to [dealing in interest or usury]—those are the companions of the fire; they will abide eternally therein.﴿ *(Quran 2: 275)*

In Islam, the distinction between legitimate (allowed) and forbidden practices is very clear. Islam permits loans and the borrowing of money, but without interest charges. In fact, the Quran highly encourages forgiving a debt in order to remove the hardship from the borrower, especially if he or she is in financial difficulties. Allah has promised a great reward for the one who is able to make this sacrifice.

Muslims who abide by these rules consequently never suffer negative repercussions. In contrast, when human beings disobey God Almighty, they are engulfed by disastrous results. These may come in the form of threats to health, financial collapse, break-up of the social fabric, and much more. So it is clear that Islam warns people about many serious ailments afflicting our societies in this day and age; it is equally clear that these ailments are recognized by the world community as harmful. This is a powerful sign that Islam is the true religion and that Allah (Hallowed is He) is the true God, the One and only divine Lord and saviour.

17.10 Revival of the prohibition of consuming pork

Jesus followed the laws of Moses and did not eat pork at all.

> And the swine, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. You shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall not touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you. (Leviticus 11:7-8)

Nevertheless, most Christians today eat pork. Islam revived the prohibition of consuming the meat of the pig. Allah has mentioned:

﴾He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.﴿
(Quran 2: 173)

17.11 Revival of the prohibition of consuming blood

Jesus also did not eat anything containing blood, nor did he consume blood itself. God (Allah) is recorded as having instructed Prophet Moses in the Torah:

> Only you shall not eat the **blood**; you shall pour it upon the earth like water. (Deuteronomy 12:16)

> You shall not eat any flesh with the **blood** in it. You shall not interpret omens or tell fortunes. (Leviticus 19:26)

This prohibition has been revived in many verses of the Quran, one of which mentions:

﴾Say: I do not find within that which was revealed to me [anything] forbidden to one who would eat it unless it be a dead animal or blood

spilled out or the flesh of swine—for indeed, it is impure...﴿[84]

(Quran 6: 145)

17.12 Revival of the prohibition of adultery

The Bible says about adultery:

> You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. (Matthew 5:27-30)

Islam revived the prohibition of adultery by considering fornication to be amongst the strictly forbidden acts. Allah, the Most High, has mentioned:

﴾And those who do not invoke with Allah another deity or kill the soul which Allah has forbidden [to be killed], except by right, and do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse. And whoever should do that will meet a penalty.﴿ *(Quran 25: 68)*

Allah has also mentioned:

﴾And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way.﴿ *(Quran 17: 32)*

As a precaution against adultery and fornication, all acts which might lead to them are also prohibited. Thus, Islam has strictly forbidden men from being alone with non-*mahram* women, mixing

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[84] Quran 2: 173 (mentioned earlier) prohibits the meat of the pig (pork, ham, etc.) as well as the blood of any animal (even if the animal is lawful to eat). Blood must be drained from the slaughtered animal before preparing the meat for food.

with them freely, or even shaking hands with them. At the same time, it encourages men and women to dress modestly and to speak to non-mahrams with a firm, business-like voice that is not enticing.

At this point, one may inquire about the wisdom behind the prohibition of adultery. The answer is that pre-marital and extra-marital relationships are destructive to the family system, which is so precious in Islam. Intimate relationships outside the sacred bond of marriage have numerous harmful effects. Some of these include diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and children who are looked down upon in society and considered to be without a lineage.

Revival of various beneficial practices

Along with the doctrinal teachings about the nature of Allah and Jesus that were revived by the religion of Islam, some of the detailed practices pertaining to everyday life, which Jesus and the earlier prophets had taught by example, were revived as well. Our list continues with a few examples of those teachings.

17.13 Revival of ablution before prayer

The significance of ablution is evident when we recall that it is a form of preparation for prayer, whereby worshippers cleanse themselves before they stand before Allah, the Creator.

Jesus used to wash his limbs before performing the prayer, according to the teachings of the Old Testament. Moses and Aaron have been recorded as doing the same:

> He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, with which Moses and Aaron and his sons **washed their hands and their feet**… as the LORD commanded Moses. (Exodus 40:30-32)

Islam revived ablution for prayer; the Quran has instructed:

﴾O you who have believed, when you rise to [perform] prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles...﴿ *(Quran 5: 6)*

Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) taught his followers (by his statements and his example) that ablution includes washing the hands, rinsing the mouth, washing the face, washing the arms, wiping the head, and finally washing the feet.

17.14 Revival of performing prayers physically

Jesus performed his prayers physically, not just through supplication. Mark 14:32 states, "And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he [Jesus] said to his disciples, 'Sit here, while I pray.'"

Luke 5:16 says, "But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray."

Islam revived prayers as a main act of worship. In numerous Quranic verses, Allah, the Exalted, has instructed believers to perform prayers. For example:

﴾And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].﴿ *(Quran 2: 43)*

Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) taught his followers (through words and actions) that performing prayers includes standing up, bowing down and prostrating. Interestingly, the manner of performing prayer that Jesus taught is more in line with the way Muslims pray than with what Christians do today. According to Isaiah 45:23, God is reported to have said, "To me every **knee shall bow**."

> Jesus is described in the Gospels as prostrating during prayer. The method of prostration in prayer followed by Jesus was not of his own making. It was the mode of prayer of the prophets before him. In the Old Testament, Genesis 17:3, Prophet Abraham is recorded to have fallen on his face in prayer; in Numbers 16:22

and 20:6, both Moses and Aaron are recorded to have fallen on their faces in worship; in Joshua 5:14 & 7:6, Joshua fell on his face to the earth in worship; in I Kings 18:42, Elijah bowed down on the ground and put his face between his knees. This was the way of the prophets.[85]

"Christians today kneel down, clasping their hands, in a posture which cannot be ascribed to Jesus or others."[86]

In many of his statements, Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) taught his followers the manner of prayer, including bowing down and prostrating to Allah.

17.15 Revival of compulsory charity (zakah)

Jesus (pbuh) confirmed the institution of compulsory charity known as 'the tithe (tenth)', which was required from the annual harvest. "You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year." (Deuteronomy 14:22)

The Quran is a revival of Jesus' teachings. It teaches Muslims to pay charity at the time of harvest. Allah has mentioned:

﴾And He it is who causes gardens to grow, [both] trellised and untrellised, and palm trees and crops of different [kinds of] food and olives and pomegranates, similar and dissimilar. Eat of [each of] its fruit when it yields and give its due [zakah] on the day of its harvest.[87] And be not excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess.﴿ *(Quran 6: 141)*

[85] Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 87-88.
[86] Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 87.
[87] The zakah due is one-tenth if the field is naturally irrigated (e.g., by rain) and one-twentieth if it is artificially irrigated (by the farmer's own efforts). This obligatory charity is levied on other material resources, like trade and livestock, as well.

The system of charity is well-organized; it sets different rates for cash, precious metals, various trade goods, agricultural products and cattle.[88] The purpose of charity is very well-defined; it is to provide social support to the needy people in the community, not to provide a comfortable living for clerics.[89]

The categories of those who are eligible to receive such charity have also been clearly defined in the Quran. (See 9: 60.)

In Islam, the zakah is obligatory, but voluntary charity is also highly promoted and encouraged. Often, Muslims voluntarily give far more from their wealth than the obligatory minimum amount. Allah promises great rewards for donors who give charity based on sincere intentions. In the history of Islam, there are many accounts of people who gave their entire wealth to the poor, seeking Allah's pleasure through this remarkable act of charity.

17.16 Revival of fasting

According to the Gospels, Jesus fasted for forty days. Matthew 4:2 says:

> And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry.[90] This was in accordance with the practice of the earlier prophets. Moses is also recorded in Exodus 34:28 to have fasted. It says: And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights, he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.[91]

The Quran is a revival of many of the teachings of Jesus and Moses. It teaches the believers to fast during the month of Ramadan.

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[88] For example, the amount of zakah for cash that has been held for at least one year is 2.5%.

[89] Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 92.

[90] See also Matthew 6:16.

[91] Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 92.

Allah has mentioned in the Quran that fasting is enjoined on the Muslims as it was enjoined on previous nations.

﴾O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.﴿ *(Quran 2: 183)*

In addition, Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) affirmed that Prophet David used to fast regularly; he said:

«The best manner of (voluntary) fasting is that of my brother David, who used to fast every other day.» (Recorded by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

17.17 Revival of greeting with the supplication of peace

According to Dr. Bilal Philips, Jesus greeted his followers by saying, "Peace be with you."[92] This greeting was the same as that mentioned in the books of the Old Testament. Prophet David instructed emissaries whom he sent to Nabal, "And thus you shall greet him: 'Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have.'" (1 Samuel 25:6)

As a religion of peace and respect for others, Islam revived this noble moral teaching.

The Quran instructs all those who enter homes to give the greetings of peace; Allah has instructed the believers to greet each other with peace as well.

﴾And when those come to you who believe in Our verses, say: Peace be upon you....﴿ *(Quran 6: 54)*

Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) also taught his followers to give this greeting whenever they met each other. The greeting of peace extends

92 Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 90.

even to the heavens; the angels will greet those who enter paradise with the same greeting of peace.

17.18 Revival of veiling (hijab) for women

> The women around Jesus veiled themselves according to the practice of women around the earlier prophets. Their garments were loose and covered their bodies completely, and they wore scarves which covered their hair.[93]
>
> And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel and said to the servant, "Who is that man, walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So **she took her veil and covered herself**. (Genesis 24:64-65)

Islam encourages decency and modest dress for both men and women. Muslim women are instructed to cover their bodies and to wear veils that cover their heads and chests. Allah has mentioned:

﴾And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their head covers over their chests and not expose their adornment...﴿

(Quran 24: 31)

The wisdom behind veiling is explained in Quran 33: 59, which states that it protects women from possible social harm.[94] In addition, veiling discourages males from approaching females with dishonourable intentions.

In today's society, disregard for the hijab—and for modesty in general—is one factor that has led to women being treated as objects, whereby their bodies are used as commodities from which to acquire pleasure. It is no surprise then that many companies use women as

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[93] Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 88.

[94] Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 89-90.

advertising props to entice customers into purchasing their products. The fact remains that even in the eyes of those who use women as objects, only those who keep more of their bodies covered and hidden from the public eye are regarded as modest.

17.19 Revival of polygyny

There is no record of Prophet Jesus opposing polygyny. The Old Testament records a number of examples of polygamous marriages among the prophets, including these:

> So, after Abram [Abraham] had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. (Genesis 16:3)

> And David lived with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel, and Abigail of Carmel, Nabal's widow. (1 Samuel 27:3)

Solomon is said to have "…had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines." (1 Kings 11:3)

Solomon's son Rehoboam "took eighteen wives and sixty concubines." (2 Chronicles 11:21)

The Old Testament even specified laws regarding the division of inheritance in polygamous circumstances, which indicates that the practice was a normal one in society. [95] (See Deuteronomy 21:15-16.) Jewish law actually requires polygyny in some situations. If a man dies without children, his wife is required to marry his brother even if the brother is already married; the reason is to produce an heir for her deceased husband, and her first child is considered to be his heir.

Islam revived polygyny, this practice of the earlier prophets, but it imposed stringent restrictions. It permits marriage to up to four women, with strict conditions stipulating justice and equal treatment

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[95] Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 94.

among one's wives as the basic condition for polygyny. Allah has stated:

﴾…marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses…﴿ *(Quran 4: 3)*

The only restriction on polygamy (polygyny) recorded in earlier scriptural teaching was the ban (in Leviticus 18:18) on taking a wife's sister as a rival wife.[96] This law is applied in Islam as well, as stated in Quran 4: 23.

17.20 Revival of male circumcision

Jesus was circumcised. According to Luke 2:21:

> And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

According to the Old Testament, Prophet Abraham (pbuh), who was himself neither a Jew nor a Christian, was the first to be circumcised.

> And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. **He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised**." (Genesis 17:9-12)

Today circumcision is not widely treated as a religious or legal requirement among Christians, and rates of circumcision vary across different countries. Although it is a controversial topic for some, the medical benefits have been documented. In 2012, the American

[96] Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 95.

Academy of Pediatrics website published its "Circumcision Policy Statement," stating:

> Evaluation of current evidence indicates that the health benefits of newborn male circumcision outweigh the risks and that the procedure's benefits justify access to this procedure for families who choose it. Specific benefits identified included prevention of urinary tract infections, penile cancer, and transmission of some sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

According to the World Health Organization website:

> There is compelling evidence that male circumcision reduces the risk of heterosexually acquired HIV infection in men by approximately 60%.

Islam revives male circumcision and makes it a requirement.[97] Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) said:

«There are five practices which correspond with the natural human inclination: shaving pubic hair and underarm hair, **(male) circumcision**, trimming the moustache, and trimming fingernails and toenails.» (Recorded by Imams Bukhari, Muslim and others)

Conclusion

Islam revived the faith of the prophets, which is based upon the belief in one God (Allah). Along with belief, they revived many rules and practices related to morality, justice and pure living. Hence, the Islamic way of life is much closer to that of Jesus and the previous prophets (peace be upon them all) than that of any other group of people who claim to be their followers.

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[97] Although circumcision is highly recommended for a man who becomes Muslim, Islamic scholars say that if he is unable to do it, it should not be insisted upon, and this does not affect the validity of his embracing Islam.

18. FEATURES OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

Allah has made the message of Islam easy to understand and to follow. He annulled some previously prescribed rites and practices, while he affirmed others, according to His wisdom. As a result, the Islamic creed and law are suited to people's spiritual, psychological, social and economic needs, for all of humankind and for all eras. Islamic teachings have the following unique features:

18.1 Rationality

The truth should be clear and obvious. It should be so simple that anyone is capable of seeing it, and this clarity is the most compelling feature of Islam. One should not have to work through a series of complicated logical proofs in order to derive a fundamental principle, only to arrive at something that he or she is unsure of—yet this is often the case with other religions or philosophies.

18.2 Perfection

Since Allah is perfect, His teachings must also be perfect and free from any contradiction or error. The Quran challenges its readers to find any errors in it, if they do not believe it is really from Allah:

﴾Then do they not reflect upon the Quran? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction.﴿

(Quran 4: 82)

Dr. Maurice Bucaille, a French Christian surgeon, found many scientific facts that were mentioned in the Quran but that were not known by humans at the time that the verses of the Quran were being conveyed by Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) to those around him. Bucaille wrote, “I could not find a single error in the Quran.”[98]

18.3 Clarity

Allah is the Most Compassionate. He therefore guides people through clear and simple revelations that are free of myths, superstitions and mysteries.

18.4 Scientific validity and accuracy

It is not surprising to find in the Quran, and in the statements of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh), information that has only recently been discovered by modern science. This indicates that the Quran is the word of Allah and that Muhammad (bpuh) is His messenger. On the other hand, the religious views which the church presented concerning God, the Bible, and the individual’s relation to God forced people into an unfortunate choice: either science or God. Most educated people have come to the conclusion that one cannot be a scientist or an educated person and be a true Christian at the same time. Many philosophers and scientists, and the majority of lay people, have lost hope of reconciling religion and science; thus the ideology of secularism was developed and has since flourished. This dichotomy would not have arisen if the original scripture that was revealed to Jesus (pbuh) had not been distorted. Islam, the pure religion, raises no contradiction whatsoever between religion and science. This is naturally obvious because both religion and true

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[98] Bucaille, *The Quran and Modern Science*.

scientific knowledge are from the same source: Allah, the Exalted, who does not contradict Himself.[99]

18.5 Prophetic fulfilment

Many of the events prophesied in the Quran and in the Prophet's statements have come to pass. This is further proof that Islam is not a man-made religion, because it would be unimaginable for an uneducated man who was living isolated from other civilizations to make up such prophecies.

18.6 Moderation

In Islam, there is no conflict between spiritual and worldly life. Rather, it provides a balance among all aspects of human life, taking into account the needs and wants of individuals and society. Therefore, secularism, materialism, monasticism and extreme asceticism are all rejected in Islam, which provides a middle way to achieve harmony and balance between the spiritual and material needs of people. This is why Allah has called the Muslim nation a:

﴾...just community [moderate nation]...﴿ *(Quran 2: 143)*

18.7 Comprehensiveness

Islamic teachings provide people with definite guidelines to follow in all aspects of life: spiritual, individual, social, moral, political, economic, and so on.

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[99] For more information on the many scientific facts that are referenced in the Quran, see *The Quran and Modern Science* by Dr. Maurice Bucaille and *A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam* by I. A. Ibrahim (available online at www.islam-guide.com).

18.8 Uniqueness

Some have claimed that the Quran is man-made; Allah challenges them to:

﴾...produce a chapter the like thereof...﴿ *(Quran 2: 23)*

Indeed, the entire Quran—its language, its elegance, its miraculous nature—is unparalleled. The ancient non-Muslim Arabs tried to construct a verse yet failed, even though their language and poetry was very highly developed in that era. Even many recent non-Muslim scholars admit that the Quran is one of the greatest books known to humankind. This point ultimately leads to the fact that Muhammad (bpuh)—the illiterate—was a true prophet to whom the Quran was revealed.

18.9 Justice

All of humankind descended from one man and one woman (Adam and Eve). Islam teaches that the criterion by which all human beings are judged is righteousness, not the colour of their skin or their status in society. In the view of Allah, the best person is the most righteous. A verse of the glorious Quran reads:

﴾...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...﴿ *(Quran 49: 13)*

19. ISLAM, THE UNIVERSAL RELIGION

Islam is a universal message to all of humankind, for all times until the Day of Judgement, whereas every other prophet was sent to his own people, and for a limited time period. Muhammad (bpuh) was sent for everyone: male or female, rich or poor, Arab or non-Arab, slave or freeborn. Islam can be practiced anywhere on the earth; it is not tied to locality or culture. Prophet Jesus' mission was limited to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). Therefore, if you are not from the tribes of Israel (the descendants of the twelve sons of Prophet Jacob)—as is the case with Indians, other Asians, Africans, indigenous peoples and Europeans—and you are a Christian, then you are following a prophet (Jesus) and a message which was not meant for you. This means you are not on the right track!

20. WHY ISLAM?

Every person should revert to Islam because it is the birthright of every person and the original print on every human soul at birth.

Every person should revert to Islam because Allah has sealed and superseded all previous messages with Islam. Allah has mentioned to all people:

﴾…This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favour upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion…﴿ *(Quran 5: 3)*

Every person should revert to Islam because people in every era must worship their Lord (Allah) according to the law prescribed by Him as revealed to His Prophet (bpuh). The tribes of Israel, for example, were ordered to worship Allah according to the law of Moses. When Prophet Jesus was sent to them, they were ordered to worship Allah according to what was prescribed in the Gospel. Then when Allah sent Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) with the message of Islam to all people, it became incumbent on all people, **the tribes of Israel and all others**, to enter Islam.

After all, what could be more serious than the rejection of the religion which the Creator and Sustainer of everything has enjoined upon all people? Indeed, this is the greatest injustice committed by human beings. It is sad but true that if a person dies in this state, he or she will be punished and cast into the hellfire to live there for eternity. This concept has been emphasized hundreds of times in the Quran and in the statements of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh). Allah has mentioned:

﴾And whoever desires other than Islam as religion—never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the hereafter, will be among the losers.﴿ *(Quran 3: 85)*

Also, Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) said:

«Whoever among the Christians and Jews hears of me, does not follow what I have brought, and dies in this state will be among the inhabitants of hellfire.» (Recorded by Imam Muslim)

Note that Allah was reported to have said in a prophecy, "And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him." (Deuteronomy 18:19)

Since it has been proven that the prophet referred to here is Muhammad (bpuh), this means that whoever believes in the Bible must believe in this prophet and in what this prophet says; otherwise, they will be called to account for that. After they realize who this prophet is, it follows logically that they must adhere to his teachings.

There are those who may not accept Islam because they think that becoming a Muslim means to turn one's back on all previous prophets sent by Allah. This is a false concept because of the following:

Firstly, belief in all prophets of Allah is a pillar of Islamic faith; hence, one is not a believing Muslim unless he or she believes in Jesus, Moses and all the other prophets.

Secondly, belief in the prophets is a part of what each prophet taught. (In other words, every prophet called his people to believe in the prophet who would come after him and to follow that prophet whenever he appeared). Therefore, rejecting a prophet amounts to rejecting his predecessor.

Thirdly, rejecting any prophet amounts to the rejection of the One Who sent him: Allah.

Fourthly, Islam promises great rewards to the followers of previous faiths if they believe in Islam in addition to their previous faith.

The Messenger of Allah (bpuh) said:

«Three people have a double reward: a person from the People of the Scriptures (the Jews and the Christians) who believed in his

prophet (Jesus or Moses) and then believes in Prophet Muhammad (by embracing Islam)...» (Recorded by Imam Bukhari)

The first reward is for believing in their previous religion (before knowing about Islam); the second reward is for recognizing the truth of Islam and following it.

From the Islamic perspective, the relationships among the prophets are like the relationships among the links in a chain; rejecting one of them amounts to rejecting all of them. Likewise, becoming a Muslim means having the honour of believing in all the prophets who came before Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) and not turning one's back on any previous prophets.

Finally, we have to accept Islam because Islam has revived the eternal divine teachings that had been either forgotten, lost or distorted in the previous messages. Islam retains and maintains the practical teachings mentioned in the previous scriptures (as originally revealed), which are part of the birthright of all people until the end of this world.

21. A FINAL CALL TO REASON

A concluding suggestion: consider what everyone has in common. Come, let us reason together:

﴾Say: O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you—that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah. But if they turn away, then say: **Bear witness that we are Muslims** [submitting to Him].﴿ *(Quran 3: 64)*

In the noble Quran, ﴾People of the Scripture﴿ is the respectful title given to the Jews and the Christians. Muslims are being commanded to invite them with noble and respectful words: O People of the Book, O learned people, O people who claim to be the recipients of divine revelation of a holy scripture, let us gather onto a common platform: that we worship none but Allah, because none but Him is worthy of worship and because He is our Lord and Cherisher, our Sustainer and Evolver, worthy of all praise, prayer and devotion.

These truths are basic and an integral part of any human being's intellect. Sort through the layers of indoctrination which hide this simple fact, and one will be able to see that deep down, every human being retains the simple and obvious concept of Allah. In essence, every human being agrees that there is only One God worthy of worship, One God who is free of partners, helpers, and anything that is ascribed to Him falsely.

22. THIS IS IT

In this book, you have been shown the right path, and Allah has given you the ability to distinguish right from wrong. He has also given you the freedom of choice as to whether or not to accept the message of Islam. If you accept His call, you will be warmly welcomed into paradise. If you reject it, you will end up with the biggest loss ever imagined: the loss of paradise and the guarantee of dwelling in hellfire for all eternity. Take a moment to comprehend what **eternity** really means. It is a very frightening realization.

To those who have been faithful Christians, you are warmly welcome to embrace Islam because:

- Jesus asked his followers to follow Muhammad (bpuh) whenever he appeared. (See Chapter 15: The Amazing Prophecies of Muhammad [bpuh] in the Bible.)
- When Jesus comes back before the end of this world, he will follow Muhammad (bpuh) and abide by his teachings.

Yes, since Jesus called his true followers to follow it while he was on the earth, and he will follow Islam when he comes back, all faithful Christians should follow Islam as well.

To those who have been believing Jews, remember that Abraham and Moses surrendered themselves completely to their Lord, whether they called Him Elohenu, God or Allah. All pride in ethnicity or ancestry is vain; what will matter in the end is your individual relationship with your Creator. This means total submission: Islam.

To those of other faiths or those who, until now, did not feel that they had any faith at all, consider this message **now**, without any reluctance or hesitation, before it is too late**—before death overtakes you**. It could be soon. Who knows?

23. A WHISPER

Some people are not able to find the truth because of their blind commitment to their beliefs. Their tenacious adherence is usually not based on an intellectual understanding of the teachings but on powerful cultural and emotional influences. Because they were brought up in a particular family or society, they firmly cling to the beliefs of that group, believing that they are upholding the truth.

There are others who are convinced about the religion of Islam and are mentally ready to embrace it. However, when they contemplate the drastic changes it will bring to their lives, changes that might not please their families and communities, they hesitate, and even after taking the decision, they sometimes go back and change their minds later.

It is whispered in their ears that no matter how much money, prestige, status and power an unbeliever might have possessed in this life, he or she will never have enough to buy entrance into paradise. In the hereafter, the poorest inhabitant of Earth who has testified to the truth of Islam will be far happier and more dignified than the richest person who did not accept the message of Islam.

Rejecting Allah's message is the biggest sin that one can commit. For this reason, while the soul is still in his or her body, the wise individual should take this opportunity; he or she is still alive to accept Allah's message before it is too late. The time for repentance is limited because once death arrives, it is no longer possible to obtain forgiveness.[100] Allah has mentioned:

﴿ [For such is the state of the disbelievers] until, when death comes to one of them, he says: My Lord, send me back that I might do

[100] Compiled from Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Led Me to Islam.*

righteousness in that which I left behind. No! It is only a word he is saying…》[101] *(Quran 23: 99-100)*

Religion is, without question, the most important aspect of a person's life, for it determines whether or not a person is rightly guided. It follows, therefore, that choosing the true faith is the most important personal decision one must make, and this decision needs to be based on clarity and total conviction. When it comes to matters of religion and creed, nothing must be left to chance. This is because the one who is truly guided—as opposed to the one who is not—will surely find eternal happiness in the hereafter!

Having been presented with the previous proofs, one should use his or her intellect to analyze and reason. A crossroad has been reached, and Allah (Glorified is He) calls on all people to follow the clear, straight road and avoid all the murky, dubious ones. The right path has now become distinct from the wrong path, as Allah has mentioned:

《There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in taghoot and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.》 *(Quran 2: 256)*

It is my duty and responsibility, as a resident of this great planet, and as one who has submitted my free will to the law and commandments of the Supreme Being, to urge all human beings to stay away from the worship of false deities—to stop putting their faith in statues, sphinxes, figures, amulets, talismans, horseshoes, and any other objects that have been manufactured by humans or created by God. After first repenting, a person should submit completely to the will of Allah, the Only God of the universe.

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[101] The unbelievers will ask for a 'second chance' when they see the angels ready to punish them, but it will be too late; they were given the time, the intellect and the guidance, but they neglected it for years until time ran out.

24. WHAT IS MOTIVATING PEOPLE TO TURN TO ISLAM?

It is a fact that Islam is growing rapidly in the West and around the world. In the U.S. alone, the number of Muslims has risen dramatically, from about 10,000 in 1900 to at least several million people today. Here are four main reasons that attracted non-Muslims to become Muslims:

1. Islam teaches that all believers are equal in the eyes of God, and it forbids any form of racism or discrimination due to colour, land of origin, tribe, etc.
2. Islam does not have a religious hierarchy; there is no priesthood in Islam, so individuals have a direct relationship with God without intermediaries. All Muslims are taught to do good and avoid evil and to educate themselves about their religion, and they go to reputable scholars for knowledge and advice.
3. Islam teaches that all its followers are considered normal human beings. No one is allowed to exalt himself or herself over others by claiming divinity, or to deceive the community by claiming to have a direct message and/or direct alliance with God, or to have spoken with God. No one can make the false allegation that God has taken him as a son and that as a result of that, people should follow this person blindly!

   Unfortunately, some members of the clergy utilize this concept to deceive their followers for their own personal benefit. An example is when they convince their followers that they cannot be questioned and are beyond approach; some even solicit sexual relations from vulnerable individuals who come to ask them questions and/or seek forgiveness from sins through them.

I spoke to one young woman who turned to Islam after waking up from her sleep and discovering this huge lie and deceit… finally realizing that she had squandered her modesty and decency in the bed of a drunk clergyman!

4. Islam teaches its adherents to establish and strengthen their own direct relationship with Allah, where no intercession on the part of another person is needed. In Islam, there is no church to act as intermediary between an individual and Allah. It rejects the concept of seeking forgiveness of sins by confessing to a priest, an ordinary human being, who has no authority to absolve anyone of sin.

   Muslims must follow the guidance of God's law as it has been revealed, and this will lead them to success. If individuals err, they only have to turn to Allah, because He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. Islam frees the mind from barriers and roadblocks, granting its followers unobstructed access to Allah. It teaches that Allah is the only One from Whom people should seek forgiveness. He does not need intermediaries (in any form) standing in between, presenting themselves as the gatekeepers to Allah and contending that only through them may people have access to Him. Islam strictly rejects the man-made concept of confessing one's sin to a human being such as a "priest", and it rejects the act of seeking salvation through this person. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing, Most Merciful and Most Knowledgeable. He is All-Rich. He does not need intermediaries to convey the needs of people to Him. People only need to raise their hands and say, "Allah, please forgive me; I promise to repent," and Allah will forgive them. That's it!

   In general, this direct relationship is a means of accessing Allah's mercy and forgiveness. This concept is logical and straightforward; anyone would naturally be pleased to hear and believe it.

However, Allah (God) warns humankind that He refuses to forgive those who associate partners with Him:

﴾Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly gone far astray.﴿ *(Quran 4: 116)*

25. HOW TO BECOME A MUSLIM

Every religion has its own requirements for conversion. Someone who wants to become Jewish must pledge all of the following:

1. To enter the ‘eternal covenant’ between God and the people of Israel and to become a Jew of his or her own free will;
2. To accept Judaism to the exclusion of all other religious faiths and practices, which means to deny the prophethood of Jesus and Muhammad (bpuh) and to deny the revelations that God sent to humankind through them;
3. An undivided loyalty to Judaism and to the Jewish people under all circumstances;
4. To commit to learning the Torah and other Jewish knowledge; and
5. To raise his or her children as Jews.

To be a Christian, one must:

1. Believe that God (Allah) has a partner, a mother and a son;
2. Believe that every newborn baby is born sinful;
3. Believe that God became a man and descended to the earth to die for the sins of the people;
4. Deny the prophethood of Muhammad (bpuh) publicly; and
5. Deny that the Quran is revelation from Allah, the Exalted.

However, to become a Muslim is simple. One must:

1. Bear witness that there is none worthy of worship other than Allah (in other words, disown all false gods),
2. Bear witness that Muhammad (bpuh) is His messenger,
3. Believe in all the six articles of faith, and

4. Worship Allah as taught by Prophet Muhammad (bpuh).

Hence, becoming a Muslim is a simple and easy process. If anyone has a real desire to be a Muslim and has full belief that Islam is the true religion of God, all he or she needs to do is to pronounce the *shahadah*, the testimony of faith.[102] Pronunciation of this testimony with a sincere heart brings the person into the fold of Islam. It is the main gateway to Islam.

Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) said:

«Whoever testifies that there is none worthy of being worshipped but Allah, Who has no partner; that Muhammad is His slave and prophet; that Jesus is the slave of Allah, His prophet, and His word[103] which He bestowed in Mary and a spirit created from Him; that paradise (heaven) is true; and that the hellfire is true—Allah will eventually admit him into paradise, according to his deeds.» (Recorded by Imam Bukhari)

The first part of the testimony consists of the most important word of truth that Allah has ever revealed to His noble prophets, "There is nothing divine, or worthy of being worshipped, except for Allah." He has stated:

﴾And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that: There is no deity except Me, so worship Me.﴿

(Quran 21: 25)

Bearing this testimony implies that all forms of worship—whether praying, fasting, supplicating, seeking refuge, or offering an animal as sacrifice—must be directed to Allah and to Him alone. Directing any form of worship to other than Allah (whether to an angel, a prophet,

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[102] The words of the shahadah are: *Ash-hadu al-la ilaha illa Allah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan Abduhu wa Rasooluhu.* (I testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.)

[103] It means that Jesus was created when Allah said the word "Be"; when He said it, Jesus was created in the womb of his mother, Mary.

Jesus, Muhammad [bpuh], a saint, an idol, a statue, the sun, the moon, a tree, a cross or anything else) contradicts the fundamental message not only of Islam but of all the prophets; it is an unforgivable sin in the hereafter, so one must repent before death.

The second part of the testimony means that Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) is the slave and the chosen messenger of Allah.[104] This implies that a true Muslim obeys and follows the commands of the Prophet (bpuh) as mentioned in the collections of his hadiths. One must believe in what he has said, practice his teachings and avoid what he has forbidden because the hadiths were, in fact, revelations and inspiration conveyed to him by Allah.

As mentioned earlier, Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) was sent in order to implement the Quran in a practical way through his sayings, deeds and legislation, as well as all the other facets of life. When his wife Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) was asked about his character, she replied:

«His character was that of the Quran.» (Recorded by Imams Muslim and Abu Dawood)

Hence, to truly adhere to the second part of the shahadah is to follow his example in all walks of life. Allah has mentioned:

﴾Say [O Muhammad]: If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.﴿ *(Quran 3: 31)*

A true Muslim must strive to mould his or her life and character to emulate the Prophet (bpuh), for he was a living example for human beings to follow. Allah has said to His Prophet (bpuh):

﴾And indeed, you are of a great moral character.﴿ *(Quran 68: 4)*

Allah has also said to all people:

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[104] The meaning of 'slavery to Allah' was explained in Chapter 11: The Meaning of Worship in Islam.

﴾There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.﴿ *(Quran 33: 21)*

When one enters the fold of Islam, all previous sins are forgiven; one starts a new life of piety and righteousness since he or she, in essence, has repented from the ways and beliefs of the previous life. One man told the Prophet (bpuh) that he would accept Islam only under the condition that Allah would forgive his sins; the Prophet (bpuh) asked him:

«Do you not know that accepting Islam destroys all sins that came before it?» (Recorded by Imam Muslim)

As soon as a person accepts Islam, he or she is free of all previous sins. The person's record is wiped clean, as if he or she was born that very day. One should try as much as possible to keep his or her records clean and strive to do as many good deeds as possible; the more good deeds, the more he or she will be elevated in paradise.

It should be emphasized again that accepting Islam does not mean turning your back on the messages of previous prophets (peace be upon them all). Indeed, it is a fulfilment of those messages. Therefore, if you are a Jew or a Christian, accepting Islam and following Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) is a fulfilment of the messages which Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them) brought, as has been clearly described and proven in Chapter 15: The Amazing Prophecies of Muhammad (bpuh) in the Bible: Twenty-eight Proofs from the Bible on Muhammad's Prophethood.

On the other hand, rejecting Islam means turning your back not only on Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) but also on Prophets Moses and Jesus. Doing so is actually a clear violation of their messages, and it diminishes your hope of paradise in the hereafter.

It is now up to you to decide where your own future home will be. I wish you all the best!

26. BEST DECISION SHE EVER MADE

Islam is often called the fastest growing religion, and each person who embraces Islam has a unique story and unique reasons. Despite widespread misconceptions about women in Islam, a growing number of women are finding that Islam is the true religion and the best way of life. Ann Ronayne's story is below; she welcomes emails from readers and can be reached at ann.ronayne1@gmail.com.

> "Me? Go live in Kuwait? No way!" That was my reaction when my manager tried to persuade me to take a position in Kuwait. But I was to learn that ﴾...the command of Allah is a decree of predestiny that is ever fulfilled.﴿ *(Quran 33: 38)*[105]
>
> I was born and raised in suburban Washington, DC in a Catholic family, and I attended Catholic schools. In the 1960s, the Catholic Church made major changes in its teachings in an attempt to be more modern; it tried to focus more on positive aspects and de-emphasize what was considered negative: punishment, regulations, abstinence from certain foods at certain times, etc. (Even so, Catholics in the West routinely ignored many of the rules that still existed, such as the prohibitions on contraceptives.) The Mass, which had always been said in Latin, was said in English instead. The nuns who taught us replaced their habits (modest dress) with modern clothes. Our religion classes had never involved reading the Bible, but now, instead of focusing on religious beliefs, they involved discussion of social issues and singing a lot of contemporary folk songs, as did the new Masses. It seemed strange that so much of what we had been taught as the truth was now completely changed. Still,

[105] This translation is taken from Hammad, *The Gracious Quran*.

when we prepared for our first Holy Communion, we were taught that the bread that the priest was putting in our mouths was the actual body of Jesus (which would bleed if we were to bite it). For these and many other reasons, I doubted my religion and rejected it from a young age.

My decision was only confirmed as I learned more. If the trinity was such an important concept, why hadn't Jesus explained that clearly (and repeated it over and over again)? If God wanted to forgive us, He could have done that without coming to Earth Himself. If He did send His son (who was also God?) down to Earth to guide us, why would He neglect to give us the message during his thirty-three years, so that the truth had to be discovered and given to us later by Paul, who never even met Jesus?! If Christianity were the true religion, why didn't Jesus himself live and teach it?

For many years, I considered myself an atheist or an agnostic, but I was never concerned with choosing a label. I thought it was enough that I tried to be a good person, and I felt that non-believers actually did more good works because they didn't depend on any supernatural being for help. I never felt that I was searching for answers about the purpose of life or about religious beliefs.

After the Gulf War, I was working as a computer consultant when my company was offered a position in Kuwait which was perfect for me. My initial reaction was that I had no desire to go and work in a place where I thought women were treated as second-class citizens; after all, I had the usual stereotypes about women in a place like Kuwait. The manager on location assured me that the working environment was professional and that there were many bright women in the organization, including those who would be my supervisor and manager. I was eventually persuaded to take the contract for one year, thinking that it would be an adventure.

I soon learned that all of the stereotypes I had brought with me were wrong.

My colleagues were always friendly and respectful, and it occurred to me that it was almost the only environment I'd ever worked in where I saw no evidence of sexual harassment—not even any off-colour jokes or racy calendars hanging in cubicles. (It was certainly different from the atmosphere I'd experienced in the US military.) The women working with me were university graduates and were not shy about speaking out, and most chose to wear Islamic dress. Advertisements did not use women's bodies to sell products.

I was impressed to see the bonds among families and members of the society in general. When one colleague lost his pay check, all of the men quickly pitched in until they had collected the same amount of money for him. People also gave generously to the needy, both locally and globally.

When someone's mother called and said she needed something, the person would leave work to take her to the doctor or get what she needed. If a man's uncle died, all the men attended the funeral prayer; if a woman's aunt died, all the women went to visit her to give their condolences. When someone married or had a baby or recovered from an operation, an extensive network of family members, friends and colleagues shared that experience. Hospital rooms were large and even furnished with sofas and chairs to accommodate all the visitors.

The attitude towards the elderly was different from what I was used to, since extended families lived together, with several generations in one house; the children who didn't live in the same house came to visit often, if not daily. Grandparents had children and grandchildren living with them and were not left to live and die alone, or sent to nursing homes (which don't even exist). Older women were highly respected; they did not feel the need to make themselves look young and beautiful in order to gain self-esteem.

Taking care of one's elderly parents was seen as a blessing and an opportunity for doing good deeds, rather than a burden, and care of one's parents is emphasized in the moral system of Islam. (This is not to say that non-Muslims in the West don't care about their parents, but there are different priorities and expectations. There is usually more of an emphasis on nuclear families and independence, with the elderly themselves not wishing to be a burden on their families.) In general, dealing with difficult situations was seen as a test and not a cause for despair. Taking one's own life was rare and also forbidden because only Allah has that right.

When the month of Ramadan came around, I was amazed by the idea that one billion Muslims around the world were fasting together—abstaining from food and drink every day from long before sunrise until the sun set. I joined them in fasting the entire month, although I had no intention of becoming Muslim and didn't experience the spiritual recharge that I would feel later as a Muslim.

At the time, I knew little about Islam, and I'm embarrassed to say now that I considered it a backwards religion which would only appeal to the ignorant masses. As I slowly realized that the stereotypes I had brought with me were all wrong, I became curious about the religion. As I learned more, I discovered that Islam was the reason for the moral system I had witnessed, and that these positive social aspects had been part of Islamic societies throughout the centuries. Even small things that had struck me—such as greetings given among strangers when one entered an elevator or an office—had their basis in Islamic teachings.

I got a Quran translation and some other books and began reading. Over and over again, I was surprised at what I found—and perhaps more by what I didn't find. I found a belief system which was rational and uncluttered, and I didn't find the oppression of women

or terrorism that I had expected. I was attracted by the emphasis on social justice and standing up against oppression.

I was struck by the scientific accuracy of the Quran, demonstrated by statements which describe scientific phenomena that were not discovered until recently. I learned that the Islamic world had made major contributions to scientific knowledge and was the seat of civilization and learning while Europe was in the Dark Ages. Logically, I knew that an illiterate seventh century Arab could not have written this book himself. I began to question my idea that there was no Creator—that the intricate systems that made up the universe and its life forms could have developed randomly or that we were born, lived and died with no purpose.

I was impressed that the Quran had never been changed over the years, so that the Quran we read today (in its original Arabic) is exactly the same as that revealed 1400 years ago. I was surprised to find out that Islam had the same roots as Judaism and Christianity, and that Muslims believed in the same prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (peace be upon them all).

I began to understand why Muslims loved Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) so much, and I wondered why I never knew anything about him... never even knew that he was a historical figure about whom so much was known. Authentic narrations from those who were closest to him describe him as a modest, truthful man who stood up for justice and against oppression.

I used to walk along the beach at night, looking up at the moon and stars and reflecting on Allah's creation, as the Quran recommended. I became convinced that the Quran must have been a message from God, but it took me a while to actually accept Islam… yet it was rational and simple in its essence: one Creator, Who offered us guidance to make the best of our lives in this life and the next.

Of course, there were aspects that made me reluctant to make such a momentous change in my life. For example, although I

understood the purpose and the benefits of Islamic dress, I couldn't imagine wearing it myself until I attended a Ramadan dinner at an organization for English-speaking Muslim women and met dozens of Western women who had converted to Islam, and who felt proud to dress this way.

On the day that I decided I was ready to officially declare my Islamic faith, I asked a co-worker to help me do so officially. There is actually no requirement to say this publicly or to get any kind of certificate; the declaration of faith is simply a matter of testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is his Messenger. It was a very moving experience, since I was essentially starting life over again, with a clean slate. It was undoubtedly the best decision I've ever made.

When we returned to the office, I went back to my desk and resumed work. It didn't occur to me that this was anything but a personal decision… but my friend informed everyone, and to my surprise, I received congratulations from well-wishers for the rest of the day. That evening, she invited me to her aunt's house and—with only a few hours notice—her mother, sisters, aunts, and cousins (whom I'd never met before) had a party for me, complete with gifts of Qurans, prayer dresses, gold, etc. Over the next days and weeks, I received dozens of gifts from co-workers (some of whom I had never met), friends and acquaintances. I was very blessed, and I know that others who embrace Islam sometimes encounter many hardships.

In my feminist years, we spoke of 'sisterhood', but this was my introduction to true sisterhood. Muslim women considered me their sister, simply for the sake of Allah (God). Over the years, I've met so many amazing Muslim women of all nationalities and classes and educational backgrounds, and in our gatherings, we often talk about how blessed we are and how different our lives are from what many people think. It's hard to describe the feeling

of standing in prayer, shoulder to shoulder with so many different women, knowing that we are sisters in Islam whether or not we even know each other.

It took me several weeks to build up the courage to wear the hijab (Islamic headscarf), but I found it liberating in a way that I hadn't expected. I was worried when I travelled to the U.S. wearing the hijab soon after becoming Muslim, but I needn't have been. Everywhere I went, I was greeted by other Muslims with the Islamic greeting *Assalamu alaykum* (Peace be upon you). I felt welcomed as a part of the worldwide Muslim community, and the hijab was what made that possible; if I wasn't wearing it, other Muslims would not have recognized that I was also Muslim and would not have offered those greetings.

I don't mean to claim that the Muslim community is some sort of utopia. Certainly there are problems, but the problems are not from Islam; on the contrary, they are due to ignorance and rejection of Islamic beliefs and practices. The reality is that Islam does not need a reformation; Muslims do.

27. TO SUM IT UP...

The creation and existence of everything in this world has a purpose and wisdom behind it. Human beings are the most superior creation because Allah has given them the intellect, has created everything for them, and has given them power and knowledge over most of the creation. There is obviously a specific purpose behind their existence, and this has been elaborated in this book.

Wise people are expected to behave and act in accordance with the purpose of their existence; they should not remain oblivious to the final destination, which they are going to reach one day or another.

28. CONCLUSION

The following twenty-five facts were discussed in this book:

First, the purpose of creation is to worship Allah alone.

Second, the basic message of Islam is to worship Allah alone, without any intercessor or mediator. Any form of worship that is not dedicated to Allah alone will be rejected for being a form of polytheism, which amounts to apostasy from the Islamic point of view.

Third, the evidence that only Allah has the right to be worshipped was elaborated.

Fourth, Islam is a restatement of the basic message of all religions: worship Allah alone. It is the last religion, for all people and for all times. So all people—whether they were raised as Jews, Christians, Hindus, atheists, or with any other creed—should follow Islam once they hear about it, pronouncing the testimony right away to become Muslim without further delay. Whoever rejects has rejected the message of Allah, and accordingly will be cast into hell. Such people cannot expect guidance after they have deliberately renounced guidance.

Fifth, Islam's belief system is uniquely rational, simple and uncomplicated. It rejects all forms of polytheism and false beliefs.

Sixth, both the divine origin of the name of the religion 'Islam' and the comprehensiveness of its meaning point to its truth.

Seventh, the message of false religions is paganism (the worship of creatures, rather than the Creator).

Eighth, Islam is the only religion today that teaches the right concept of Allah, free of any confusion or irrational facts.

Ninth, Islam's basic principles and characteristics point to its truth.

Tenth, indeed, Islam is the only religion that fights extremism—whether that extremism comes from secularism and materialism or from excessive spiritualism. Islam ensures a balance among spiritual, moral and materialistic needs. It is truly the middle path and is a perfectly balanced way of life. This should not be surprising, because Islamic teachings are not man-made; they have been revealed to humanity by Allah the Creator, the Most Wise and Most Knowledgeable.

Eleventh, the truth of every religion depends on its original revelation from Allah having been accurately preserved. This rule is only satisfied by Islamic teachings. The Quran is the final word of Allah, which has been preserved throughout the ages; hence it supersedes all previous scriptures.

Twelfth, Islam is the final religion, intended for all humankind. Everyone therefore has an obligation to embrace it.

Thirteenth, Allah and His creation are totally different entities. He is One, distinct from His creations.

Fourteenth, Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) was sent to all people. He is the last prophet, and his teaching, Islam, will remain the only correct and authentically revealed teaching until the Day of Judgement.

Fifteenth, prophets were human beings chosen and sent by Allah to convey and revive the original message: worship of Allah alone (monotheism) and being careful not to worship anything other than Him. Prophets were living examples of how the scriptures were to be understood and implemented.

Sixteenth, the reality of the prophets, their uniform message, and their way of life is revived and can only be found preserved in Islamic teachings, manifested in the Quran and the statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh). They are the only authentic and proven resource documents today that preserve the facts about Jesus, Moses and their messages. They guide those who follow these sources to a way of life which is more consistent with the way of life of Jesus

and Moses than that practiced by most Christians and Jews today. They guide to the love and respect of Jesus, Moses, and all the other prophets (may Allah's blessings be upon them all).

Seventeenth, Islam considers disrespect of any prophet as stepping out of the boundaries of Islam.

Eighteenth, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a virtuous woman, honoured above the women of all nations in that time.

Nineteenth, it has been proven that the Bible is widely distorted; this implies that Christianity has been distorted as well, as is evident from several doctrines introduced by humans into Christianity that resulted in its deviation from pure monotheism into tri-theism within the first 400 years after Jesus' ascension. It shall be noted that those who followed the scriptures when they were in their pure and unadulterated forms are considered to be on the right religion, and they will have nothing to fear on the Day of Judgement.

Twentieth, oral traditions passed on for generations were substantially changed from the original message. People who had never seen Jesus began to write books focusing on his personality more than his message. These articles became overly exaggerated, losing the true essence of his existence and message. They exalted him to extreme heights. This then posed a problem for Christianity as divisions arose in the doctrine, with each group espousing its own theories and explanations. This resulted in variant notions of the crucifixion, the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, the divine sonship of Christ, original sin and atonement. The following cardinal doctrines of Christianity are rejected by Islam:

- The Trinity
- The divinity of Jesus
- The notion that Jesus is the son of God
- Original sin

- Atonement (reconciliation between God and humankind brought about by the life and death of Jesus)
- Redemption (salvation from sin through Jesus' sacrifice)

Twenty-first, the popular Christian concept of salvation is inaccurate. The true way to achieve salvation is to do good deeds, to avoid and repent from sins, and to follow the commandments mentioned in the scriptures, sealed and superseded by the Quran. Islam teaches that sin cannot be transferred from one person to another, and it cannot be inherited. Each person is accountable for his or her own deeds and will be rewarded accordingly.

Allah has mentioned:

﴾And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer,[106] those will enter paradise and will not be wronged [even so much as] the speck on a date seed.﴿ *(Quran 4: 124)*

Twenty-second, there is evidence in many places in the Old and New Testaments (in their present form) that Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) was mentioned by his illustrious predecessors, namely Prophets Jesus and Moses (may Allah's blessings be upon them). With this decisive and factual evidence, it is only befitting that sincere Christians and Jews accept Islam as a continuation of the prophets' legacy left by all the messengers and prophets. Just as one cannot be a Muslim until he or she believes in Muhammad (bpuh) and all the prophets sent before him, no one is a true Jew or Christian until he or she believes in Muhammad, the prophet prophesied in both the Old and New Testaments; hence, Jews and Christians should enter Islam's fold wholeheartedly.

Twenty-third, the way to please Allah has been detailed for us. The Quran defines it clearly, and the Prophet (bpuh) gives us details at every point.

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[106] Believing in the six pillars of faith mentioned in Chapter 9: The Six Articles of Islamic Faith.

Twenty-fourth, God (Allah) is One, His message is one, and the way to Him is one: namely Islam. Allah has specified in the Quran:

﴾And [moreover] this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous.﴿

(Quran 6: 153)

Twenty-fifth—last but not least—Islam is your birthright. Yes, you read correctly. Islam is your *right*. Every human being is born into the religion of Islam, and human beings are naturally drawn to what we already know. Thus if you accept Islam, you are not turning your back on any prior revelation but rather returning to the original pure belief with which you were created. This being the case, Islam is your birthright, whereas other religious or ideological systems teach you to deviate from the pure belief with which you were created.

These are the twenty-five basic components which logically and rationally dictate that Islam should be considered the last and true religion of Allah.

Remember this

To accurately identify the true religion, you must maintain an objective point of view, one which does not allow your emotions to cloud your vision and thereby blind you to the truth. Indeed, you must look at all issues rationally so that you can separate truth from falsehood; then make a judgment and follow it with sincere prayers asking the Almighty to guide you to the right path.

Now that you have read this book '*Who deserves to be worshipped?*' and examined the evidence regarding the truthfulness of Islam, I pray to God Almighty that you can and will make the right choice! I invite you to choose Islam as your way of life and to get yourself on the right path! *La ilaha illa Allah* (There is none worthy of worship other

than God), *Muhammadan Rasool Allah* (Muhammad is the Messenger of God).

May the light of truth shine in our minds and in our hearts. May it lead us to peace and certitude in this life and to eternal bliss in the hereafter.

Kind regards,

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APPENDIX

For Further Information about Islam

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Online information about Islam

You may also wish to visit the following web sites for up-to-date information and a wealth of reading material:

www.islamfortoday.com

www.islam-guide.com

www.islamonline.net

www.islamtomorrow.com

www.missionislam.com

www.islamqa.info/ar

Online bookstores

www.iiph.com

www.islamicbookstore.com

www.al-hidaayah.co.uk

www.dar-us-salam.com

www.soundvision.com

GLOSSARY OF ISLAMIC TERMS*

abu (or *abi*)	father (of)
Allahu akbar	Allah is the Greatest
Arafah (or Arafat)	the plain outside of Makkah where pilgrims gather at the climax of the Hajj; Mount Arafah falls inside that plain. It is the mountain beside which Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) stood when he made his Hajj
bismillah	in the name of Allah
Hadith	the collected statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) that with the Quran form the basis of Islamic law
hadith	a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers
Hajj	the major pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque, site of the Kaaba at Makkah, to be undertaken by every able Muslim once in his or her lifetime
hijab	veil ordained by Allah for believing women

* If a word has become part of the English language (i.e., is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.

jinn (plural of *jinni*)	non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as 'demons' or 'devils'; They have free will like humans: some are Muslims, others disbelievers; some are obedient to Allah, others disobedient. Satan is a jinni. Some people try to 'foretell' the future by contacting a jinni. Some disobedient jinn mislead people into thinking that they can tell them what will happen in the future, near or far, or that the jinn can provide people with riches or some sort of power.
jizyah	a tax paid by Christians and Jews living under Muslim protection. (The Muslims do not pay jizyah, but they must give a percentage of personal wealth as obligatory charity to designated categories of recipients, such as the poor and the needy.)
Kaaba	the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Abraham and Ishmael
mahram	a degree of consanguinity precluding marriage; a man whom a woman may not marry due to the close blood or marriage relationship, e.g., her father, brother, son, uncle, or father-in-law
Ramadan	the ninth month in the Islamic calendar; the month of obligatory fasting
Sharia	Islamic law derived from the Quran and the statements and actions of the Prophet (bpuh)
siwak (or *miswak*)	a small twig (*usu.* of the *arak* tree) used as a natural toothbrush
taghoot	idols; everything evil that is worshipped
zakah	obligatory charity payable by Muslims, to be distributed to poor Muslims who qualify as recipients

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